

On Top Of The News

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Tuesday, July 14 2009



INSIDE TODAY

U.S. NEWS

Dr. Benjamin nominated



FILE - In this file handout photo provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Dr. Regina Benjamin poses for a portrait in the waiting room at her temporary clinic in Bayou La Batre, Ala. Thursday, Sept. 18, 2008.

(AP Photo/The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Bill Starling)

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WORLD NEWS

John Demjanjuk faces war crimes charges



FILE - In this Feb. 28, 2005 file photo, John Demjanjuk arrives at the federal building in Cleveland, USA. German prosecutors on Monday July 13, 2009, formally charged John Demjanjuk with 27, 900 counts of accessory to murder at a Nazi death camp during World War II.

(AP Photo/Mark Duncan, File)
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Aruban Swimmers train with Katie Hoff and Michael Phelps

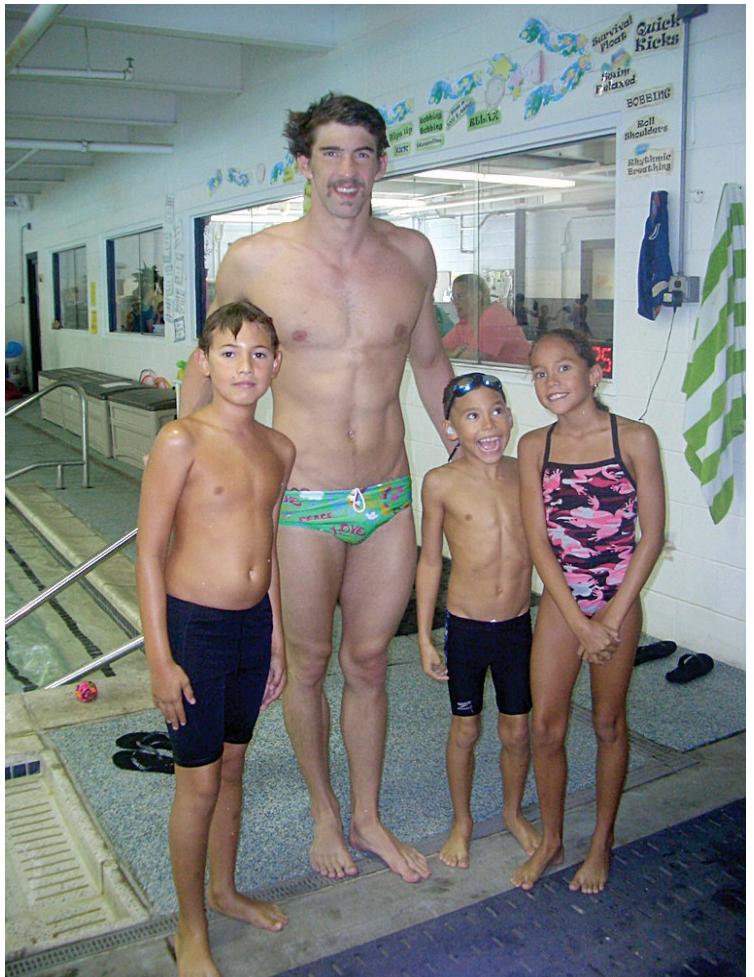


During the swimming camp in Baltimore young Aruban swimmers got to train with Katie Hoff and Michael Phelps.

During the month of June, three of our local young swimmers got the once in a

lifetime opportunity to train with 2 of the great ones in the swimming world Katie Hoff and Michael Phelps.

Daniele Kan, Lizanne Kelly and Brandon Kelly were the special ones to attend to the swimming camp in



Meadowbrook, Baltimore. Katie Hoff is known to have the US record in the 200 meters medley and 400 meters world record. Katie has won two medals consisting of one silver and a bronze in the 2008 Beijing Games, on the other hand Michael doesn't need the introduction known as the young man who broke Mark Spitz record with 8 gold medals in one single Olympic and now has 14 gold medals to his name.

Our Aruban swimmer were very excited to meet these

2 great swimmers and even more got the chance to train with them, we hope they brought back some good tips with them. □



Deanna & Gregg are wed

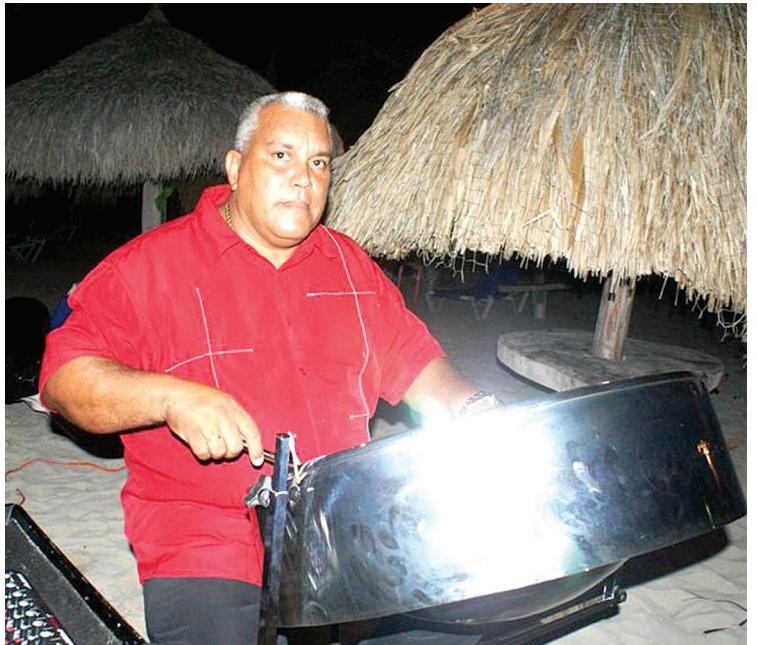


PALM BEACH -- The Christiano & Rowan wedding party at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa celebrated the nuptials of the lovebirds who have known each other for seven years, before tying the knot at an elegant beachfront blessing, followed by a tropical pool-deck dinner party with steel band music.

The good looking Deanna & Gregg, from White Plains NY, entertained 41 wedding guests feasting on local specialties prepared



by the resort culinary team. The newly weds also enjoyed their honeymoon at the resort. □



AHATA CEO Rob Smith to take position of Radisson Aruba GM



ORANJESTAD - Rob Smith, president & CEO of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA), has officially informed AHATA Chairperson Rick Zeolla and the AHATA Board of Directors of his resignation. Rob has accepted the role of general manager of the Radisson Aruba Resort, Spa & Casino, with a start date for this Fall.

Rob Smith has allowed for a lengthy transition phase, providing a 90-day notice period. During that time, as per the request of AHATA's Board, he will help organize efforts to identify his

replacement, with a search conducted both locally and internationally.

Rob Smith was first appointed to the position of president & CEO of AHATA in 2007. During his tenure, he has been instrumental in spearheading several key projects, strengthening the role of private sector strategic alliances, reenergizing public sector relationships as well as forming closer ties to the community overall. His level of involvement has since come to define the role of the AHATA president & CEO.

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Previously, Rob has held positions on the AHATA Board of Directors during his 11-year tenure with the Wyndham, and later the Westin Aruba, where he served as general manager as well as vice president of the ownership group of Aruba Hotel Enterprises. He has also held several influential positions such as a member of the Aruba Strategic Communications Task Force (2005/06) and chairman of the Aruba

Hospitality and Security

Foundation (2002-2006). While maintaining an active, local role, he also plays a part in the regional hospitality industry through his position on the Board of Directors of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (since 2000). He will utilize his extensive knowledge of hotel operations, as well as his personal passion for the island of Aruba, in his new role as the Radisson Aruba general manager.

He commented: "During my tenure as president and CEO, I have developed a stronger appreciation of the critical role AHATA plays both in our industry and for our island, and as a general manager; I intend to continue to contribute to the success of our destination through AHATA. Given the opportunity, I will serve again on the Board of Directors, in any position the Board and membership sees fit." □

SWAROVSKI

SALE

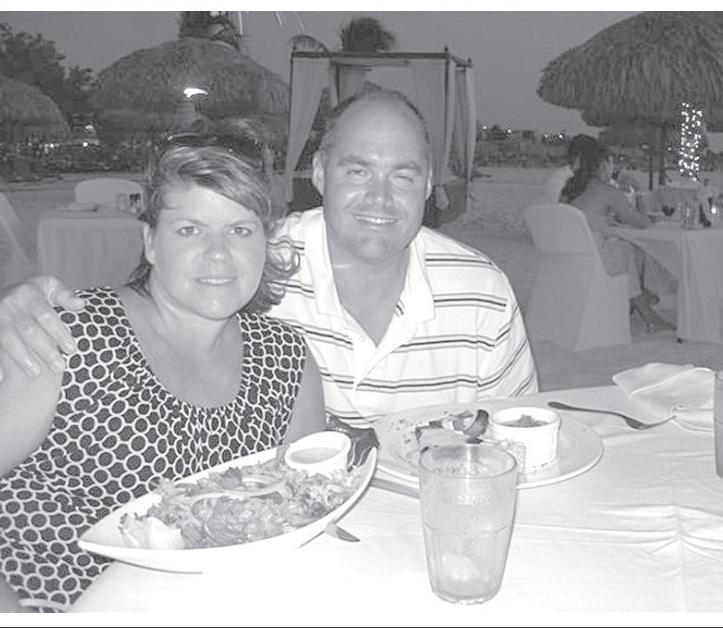
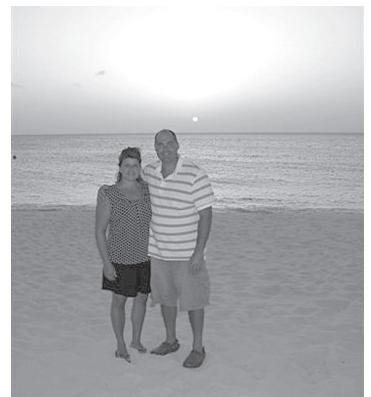
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Staying at the Aruba Marriott's Surf Club

Jay & Rhonda celebrate 18th anniversary on Aruba



PALM BEACH - Jay and Rhonda Bertsch are on Aruba for their 18th anniversary. This is their first time to Aruba. Rhonda's brother, Kent Gerber has been to Aruba 17 times for 3 weeks each so he has spent 1 full year on Aruba. He is their tour guide for 9 days. They snorkel everyday and eat out every night at a nice place. The Bertsches have 2 boys at home Hunter and Mitch. They hope to bring the boys to Aruba for their senior trip which will be several years. Rhonda is a school teacher for 6th grade English and Jay runs a fuel truck which delivers gas and diesel to farmers and other accounts. They said this is the best place on earth that they have ever been!!!!

Congratulations of your anniversary from Aruba Today □



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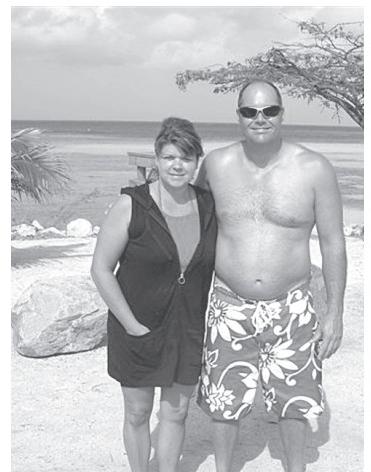
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The drawings will take place each week at 8 PM according to the following schedule:

July 9th	Crystal	AWG 7500
July 16th	Seaport	AWG 7500
July 23th	Crystal	AWG 7500 + weekend stay
July 30th	Seaport	AWG 7500 + weekend stay
August 6th	Crystal	AWG 7500
August 13th	Seaport	AWG 7500
August 20th	Crystal	AWG 7500 + weekend stay
August 27th	Seaport	AWG 7500 + weekend stay
September 3rd	Crystal	AWG 7500
September 10th	Seaport	AWG 7500
September 17th	Crystal	AWG 7500 + weekend stay
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With much tears we say goodbye to Michell Winklaar

Welcome Bert Schreunders To Digicel Aruba



ORANJESTAD - Between mixed feelings, singing and poetry workers of Digicel Aruba say goodbye to Michelle

Winklaar and welcomes Bert Schreunders as the new director of such company.

A couple of weeks ago



while they had their general meeting, Michelle announced to her colleagues and workers that she would be leaving the company to pursue something different.

Bert Schreunders, who has now taken over the company has already worked with Digicel Aruba while the company was being launched in 2003, and has also worked at Digicel Curacao and Guadeloupe. Employees said goodbye to Michelle by all viewing a video with messages from everyone saying bye bye to her, something that she can keep with her for ever. Digicel wishes Michelle all the success in her new career path and wishes their new Director Bert all the best. □



Red Sail Sports Aruba for all sail cruises

Sail with Red Sail Sports Aruba Sunset along Aruba's scenic Coastline



PALM BEACH - Red Sail Sports' catamaran will take you on an unforgettable journey: the Mexican Dinner Sail. Your trip includes a Live Mariachi Band, Mexican Food and an open bar with Tequila, Coronitas and Margaritas. The Mexican Party Sails on Friday from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Aruba's trade winds provide the ideal conditions for sailing aboard Red Sail Sports' top quality, luxurious catamarans.

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day with the Discover Scuba Dive Course, get PADI certified or join us on our daily one and two tank dives. Red Sail Sports is Aruba's leading dive and watersports operator. Activity desks are located at the Hyatt Regency, Marriott Resorts and on Renaissance Island.

To make reservations call 586-1603 or go to www.redsail-aruba.com. Be sure to visit one of Red Sail Sports' stores for the latest in swimwear, beach essentials, T-shirts and souvenirs.



"Early Bird: daily 5-7pm
3-course dinner
for \$29.75 per person"

Experience Papillon's gripping story! Introducing a catching special for the early Birds

PALM BEACH – Henri Charrière, one of the world's most famous prisoners, would surely have had the time of his life at Papillon Restaurant in The Village, across from the Radisson Resort. Nicknamed Papillon because of the butterfly tattoo on his chest, the Frenchman was the first convict to escape from Devil's Island, something that nobody had ever done before. Charrière's thrilling, gripping...

auto-biography has been the concept behind Papillon Restaurant. The décor, the decorations and especially the restrooms wink at the thirteen terrible years Papillon spent in prison in French Guyana. Papillon restaurant's menu reflects the Frenchman's arduous journey to freedom: classic French dishes have been dusted with daring Caribbean flair and are a culinary journey for your taste buds. The spacious outside terrace is perfect for casual fine dining; the iron bars, flecks of rust and stains on the walls make one very glad not to be in Papillon's shoes in the 1940's! Charrière would undoubtedly have loved 'his' place on Aruba: this is luxury living for anyone!

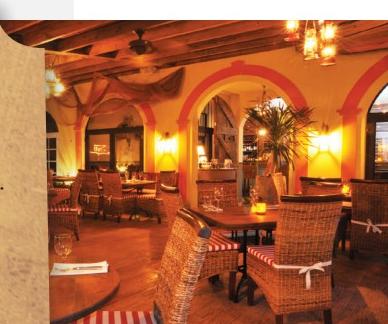
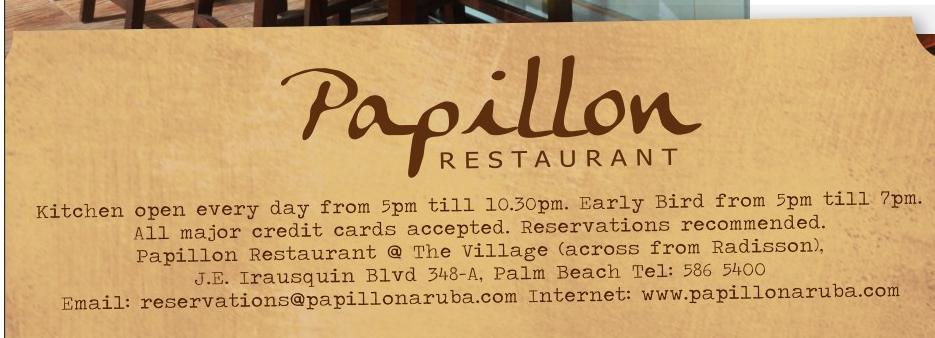
Early Bird

Papillon Restaurant offers a daily Early Bird special. A delicious 3-course meal with a glass of house wine for just \$29.75 per person between 5pm and 7pm

Opening hours

Papillon's opening hours are from 5 pm until midnight. The restaurant's daily specials will be explained by the staff. For reservations, please call 586 5400 or go to www.papillonaruba.com.

Papillon Restaurant is located in The Village, just across from the Radisson Resort.



L.G. Smith Steak & Chop House entertains

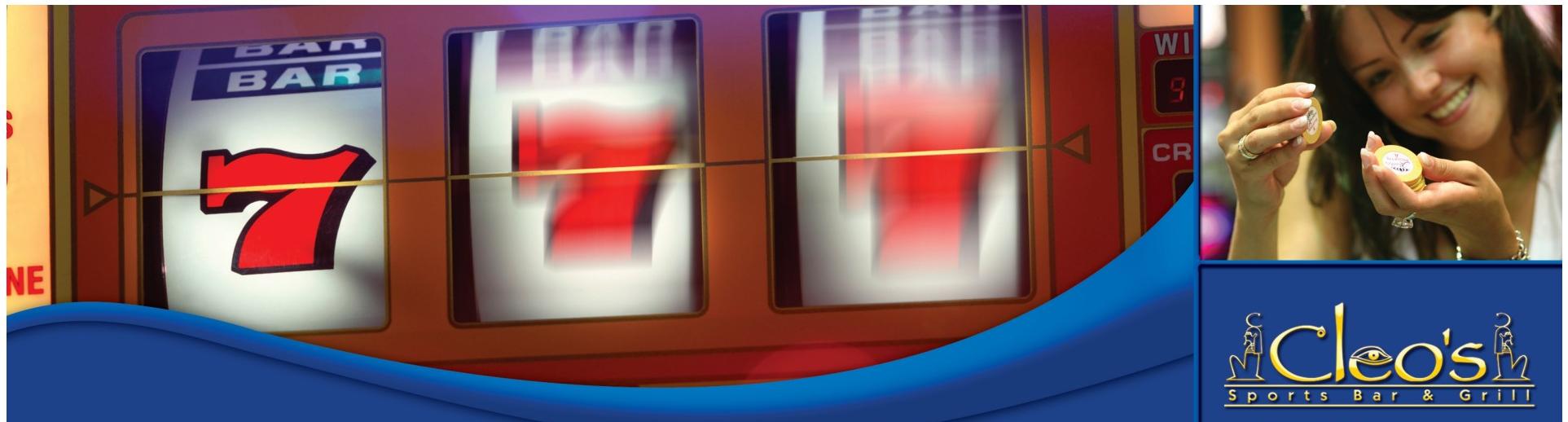
Caracol TV Colombian Celebrities



ORANJESTAD – Karoll Marquez, Diana Patricia Hoyos and Hadar Guerra stars of OYE BONITA, a very popular telenovela, and well-known artists in their own rights, visited Aruba this weekend attending an event organized by Aruba's Department of Culture and the association of Friends of Colombia.

The stars dined at L.G. Smith Steak & Chop House the night of their arrival and were hosted by Mildred H. Theijesen, Sales Coordinator and representatives of the two other co-host organizations.

The L.G. Smith's Steak & Chop House offers elegant, gracious dining in the heart of Oranjestad with a spectacular view of the bustling harbor, boulevard and the Seaport marina featuring some of the best beef on the island, Certified Angus Beef, and many other quality cuts of meat, all superbly prepared in traditional steakhouse style, with favorites such as Surf & Turf and Filet Mignon, Heart of Ribeye and Porterhouse sharing the limelight with the island's abundance of fresh seafood and signature entrees like a Grouper Filet and Lobster Thermidor. □



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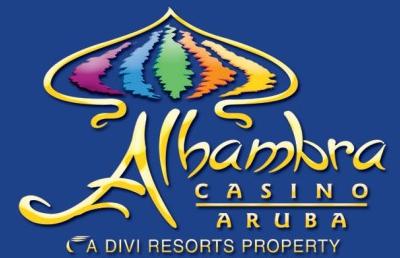
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Aruba TODAY

KEEP ARUBA CLEAN...



THANKS FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

Tina & Dwayne share their joy with guests



PALM BEACH - Tina & Dwayne enjoyed a beach barbecue at the Radisson Aruba Resort Spa & Casino as 103 guests of their elegant destination wedding celebration arrived on the island for a weekend of festivities. The Marklands, from New York, hosted the tropical rehearsal dinner toes-in-the sand, featuring a delicious island menu, the night before their super-spectacular wedding. □



A dinner under the Caribbean sky!

Don't miss our Plentiful Paella!

Las Ramblas
Tapas & Charcoal Grill

The menu features authentic Spanish tapas and entrees such as delicious Seafood Paella, USDA Beef Tenderloin & New Zealand Lamb Chops from the charcoal grill.

Open from 6.00pm - 10.30pm. Closed on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Reservation recommended

For reservation call 520-1100 ext. 6154



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Ask about the Early Bird Menu from 4 PM to 6:30 PM



Fishes & More specialize in fresh fish and seafood, and at the same time please the non-fish lovers as well. All the dishes are prepared a la minute by an internationally experienced kitchen team, which gives the twist to our dishes. Influences from all

over the world are found back on the menu and they are already well known for our daily changing specials. If you have a large party, or if there is anything you feel like in particular, Fishes & More can always arrange to have your dinner cooked

just for you, as they work only with fresh and honest products!

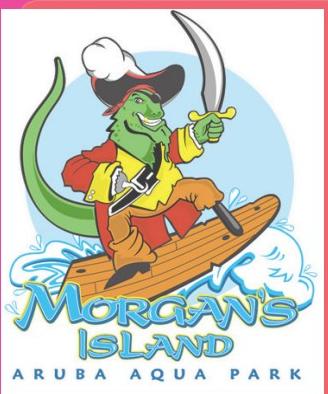
Ideally located in front of the Occidental Resort (Former Allegro), they are visited both by individuals and families alike, as we have a kids playground and a kids menu to entertain them, so they can enjoy their dinner as much as you will yours!

We have entertainment every night at 8PM, and even after dinner the perfect night out continues, as you can shop till you drop since the shops on our friendly



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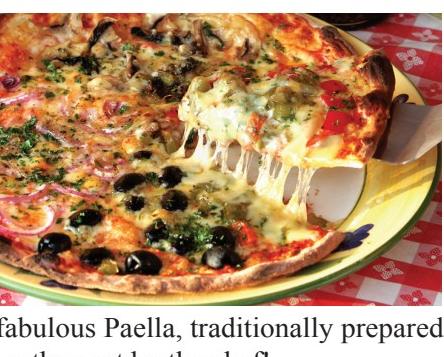
Call: 594-7395 or 592-7711



CasaTua Barcelona Downtown & Pizzeria Palm Beach

The Casa Tua Barcelona atmosphere is cool and relaxed with its in- and outside seating while the Pizzeria Palm Beach location serves their guests on a cozy outside terrace.

Both restaurants serve the same brick-oven thin crusted pizzas and both pour the same homemade Sangria. Where the restaurants differ from each other is certain menu items and the opening hours. Casa Tua Barcelona downtown is open for lunch with delicious lunch specials from Monday till Friday. One lunch special is a \$ 9.95 Beef Tenderloin with red wine sauce. All nights of the week Casa Tua Barcelona serves Cold and Hot tapas as appetizers or the delicious Iberian Ham Pata Negra which we import directly from Andalucía. As your main course you should choose the



fabulous Paella, traditionally prepared on the spot by the chef!

The staff at both popular eateries have set the standard on the island for the term "great service" not only with your dining pleasure, but recognized as 'the' professionals in assisting guests with the perfect cocktail, paired wine or other beverages.

Casa Tua Barcelona offers a live flamenco show on Fridays while you can enjoy daily live music at Pizzeria Arawak. Wherever you decide to go, you won't be disappointed.



At Arawak Gardens enjoy the EarlyBird Special:
From 5.30 – 7.00 for \$ 19.95

Choice: Soup or Salad as appetizer, Chicken Breast Francesa or Linguini Pomodoro or Penne Pesto or Pasta Carbonara as main course and a choice of Flan a l'orange or chocolate mousse as dessert.

Casa Tua Barcelona Downtown open from 11.30am – 10.30pm, Sundays from 5pm – 10.30pm Tel. 588 5695

Casa Tua Pizzeria Palm Beach open from 5pm to 11pm 7 days a week tel 586 8470

Why Are Human Brains So Big?

Rachael Rettner
LiveScience Staff
LiveScience.com

There are many ways to try to explain why human brains today are so big compared to those of early humans, but the major cause may be social competition, new research suggests.

But with several competing ideas, the issue remains a matter of debate.

Compared to almost all other animals, human brains are larger as a percentage of body weight. And since the emergence of the first species in our Homo genus (*Homo habilis*) about 2 million years ago, the human brain has doubled in size. And when compared to earlier ancestors, such as australopithecines that lived 4 million to 2 million years ago, our brains are three times as large. For years, scientists have wondered what could account for this increase.

The three major hypotheses have focused on climate change, the demands of ecology, and social competition. A new statistical analysis of data on 175 fossil skulls supports the latter hypothesis.

Behind the hypotheses The climate idea proposes that dealing with unpredictable weather and major climate shifts may have increased the ability of our ancestors to think ahead and prepare for these environmental changes, which in turn led to a larger, more cognitively adept brain.

The ecology hypothesis states that, as our ancestors migrated away from the equator, they encountered environmental changes, such as less food and other resources. "So you have to be a little bit more clever to figure it out," said David Geary, a professor from the University of Missouri. Also, less parasite exposure could have played a role in the makings of a bigger brain. When your body combats parasites, it cranks up its immune system, which uses up calories that could have gone to boost brain development. Since there are

fewer parasites farther away from the equator, migrating north or south could have meant that our predecessors had more opportunity to grow a larger brain because their bodies were not fighting off as many pathogens.

Finally, other researchers think that social competition for scarce resources influenced brain size. As populations grow, more people are contesting for

the same number of resources, the thinking goes. Those with a higher social status, who are "a little bit smarter than other folks" will have more access to food and other goods, and their offspring will have a higher chance of survival, Geary said. Those who are not as socially adept will die off, pushing up the average social "fitness" of the group. "It's that type of process, that competition within a species,

for status, for control of resources, that cycles over and over again through multiple generations, that is a process that could easily explain a very, very rapid increase in brain size," Geary said.

Weighing the options

To examine which hypothesis is more likely, Geary and graduate student Drew Bailey analyzed data from 175 skull

fossils - from humans and our ancestors - that date back to sometime between 10,000 ago and 2 million years ago.

The team looked at multiple factors, including how old the fossils were, where they were found, what the temperature was and how much the temperature varied at the time the Homo species lived, and the level of parasites in the area. □

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WINNERS

of raffle #1, July 9th, 2009

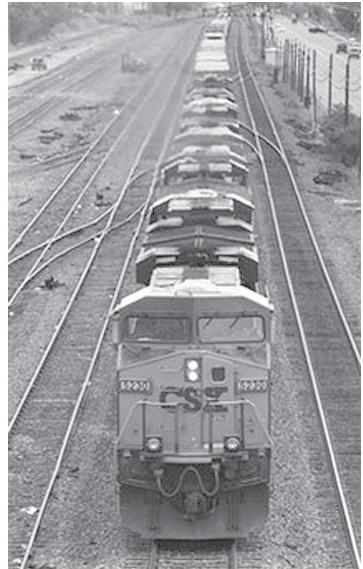
Marianella Ridderstaat	Afl 3000,-
Rosemary Patterson	Afl 2000,-
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Kenia Santana	Afl 250,-
Aizy Lampe	Afl 250,-
Aizy Lampe	Afl 250,-
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congratulations

next raffle will take place July 16, 2009 at Seaport Casino

CRYSTAL & SEAPORT CASINOS



BUSINESS*Aruba TODAY***CSX 2Q profit falls 20 percent as shipments drop**

A CSX train rolls into Buffalo, N.Y., Monday, July 13, 2009. CSX is expected to release quarterly earnings after market close Monday.

(AP Photo/David Duprey)

By SAMANTHA BOMKAMP,

AP Transportation Writer

NEW YORK — Railroad operator CSX said Monday that second-quarter earnings fell 20 percent as it collected fewer fuel surcharges and shipments continued to drop. The results still topped Wall Street's expectations, as the company slashed expenses by 27 percent.

The Jacksonville, Fla.-based company, which runs its signature blue and yellow locomotives from Canada to Florida and west to the Mississippi River, said Monday it earned \$308 million, or 78 cents per share, compared with \$385 million, or 93 cents a share, last year. Excluding charges related to the money-losing Greenbrier resort the company sold, earnings from continuing operations were 72 cents per share versus 95 cents per share last year. Revenue fell 25 percent to \$2.19 billion.

Thomson Reuters says analysts expected profit of 62 cents per share on revenue of \$2.27 billion.

CSX's shipping volume fell 21 percent in the period,

compared with 22 percent industrywide. Railroad shipping volumes are viewed as a key economic indicator because so many consumer and manufactured goods are moved on the tracks.

"While the economy continues to significantly impact our business, there are some signs that we may be seeing the bottom in many markets," CEO Michael Ward said. "Even in this difficult business environment, we are still strengthening our operations, optimizing our resources and making the right investments to prepare our network for the future." CSX said it saved millions of dollars in the second quarter as it furloughed employees and benefited from the falling price of fuel. But the decline in fuel prices also meant fuel surcharges — fees it collects from customers that vary with the price of diesel — dropped.

Labor costs fell 11 percent to \$654 million, while fuel prices sank 66 percent compared with last year.

Still, the cost savings weren't enough to offset steep declines across many of CSX's biggest segments. Metal shipping volume fell by 53 percent, as steel demand in the automotive and construction markets continued to slide.

In the automotive segment, bankruptcy filings from General Motors Corp. and Chrysler LLC, as well as the ongoing downturn in consumer demand, drove volume down 41 percent. General Motors has been CSX's biggest customer among the Detroit Three. Coal shipments, used to produce electricity and steel, dropped 21 percent.

CSX shares rose 91 cents, or 2.8 percent, to \$33.45 in aftermarket trading. The stock closed up 51 cents during the regular session to finish at \$32.54. □

Judge OKs shift of some Delphi assets to new GM

By BREE FOWLER,
AP Auto Writer

NEW YORK — A bankruptcy judge on Monday approved a deal that could shift some of auto parts supplier Delphi's assets to General Motors Co., which emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last week.

U.S. Judge Robert Gerber, who is overseeing the liquidation of Motors Liquidation Co., the collection of assets and liabilities left over after the sale of prized GM assets to a new company, gave his approval to the deal, allowing GM and an affiliate of Platinum Equity to buy the bulk of Delphi's assets and help the auto supplier emerge from bankruptcy protection. All of the assets and costs related to the agreement will transfer to the new GM and not affect the finances of "Old GM" or the possible returns for the old company's creditors, GM attorney Robert Lemons told the court.

The agreement could help save Delphi Corp. from liquidation, but still hinges on the consummation of a deal between the Troy, Mich.-based auto supplier, the new General Motors and Platinum.

As part of deal reached in June, Beverly Hills, Calif.-based Platinum will be allowed to operate Delphi's businesses both in the U.S. and abroad. Detroit-based GM will contribute a total of about \$3.9 billion, including a \$2 billion equity investment in Platinum, to help finance the deal. Platinum will contribute a maximum of \$500 million in financing.

In exchange, GM will get certain parts of Delphi, including its Saginaw, Mich.-based steering business, and assurance of a steady supply



US Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner, seen here on July 10, 2009, said Monday that the US administration's auto task force leader stepped down Monday with General Motors and Chrysler having exited bankruptcy protection under government-backed initiatives.

(AFP/Getty Images/File/Alex Wong)

of many of the parts it needs to produce its cars and trucks. Other "noncore" plants and assets will be sold off over time.

Delphi, which was GM's parts division before being spun off in 1999, filed for Chapter 11 protection in October 2005. It still produces about 10 percent of the parts used in GM's global production and its components go into nearly all of GM's North American production lines.

At the same time, GM is Delphi's largest customer and the automaker's business is crucial to its survival.

But some Delphi lenders, who have been funding the company's operations under bankruptcy protection, have objected, calling the deal with Platinum a "secretly negotiated transaction" that

violated Delphi's obligations to maximize the value of the lenders' investment.

Meanwhile, Platinum has maintained that Delphi was forced to look for funding elsewhere because the lenders didn't provide enough, and that its offer remains the best option for Delphi.

No other parties have stepped forward with a bid to buy Delphi, but the lenders have until Thursday to submit their own bid. If they do, an auction will take place the next day in front of U.S. Judge Robert Drain, who is overseeing Delphi's case, to determine which bid is superior.

A hearing on the sale of Delphi's assets is scheduled for July 23. If a sale is approved, the company has said it could emerge from Chapter 11 later this summer. □



Financials pull stocks higher

By TIM PARADIS and STEPHEN BERNARD,
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK — A turn of heart by a usually downbeat analyst yanked the stock market from its slumber.

Soaring financial shares propelled indexes to their biggest one-day gain in six weeks Monday after influential banking analyst Meredith Whitney raised her rating on Goldman Sachs Group Inc., which reports earnings on Tuesday. Whitney said also on CNBC that hard-hit Bank of America Corp. looks inexpensive given the assets on its books.

Her more upbeat tone helped lift the Dow Jones industrial average 185 points in relatively thin trading volume. It was the best performance for the blue chips since June 1 and follows a month of often directionless trading in which investors looked for any fresh sign that the economy was improving, not simply licking its wounds.

Traders saw the hopeful outlook on banks as a sign other industries could be in better shape than analysts had estimated. Hundreds of earnings reports from the April-June quarter are due this week. By the end of last week, major stock indicators had fallen 7 percent since mid-June as investors found little reason to push stocks higher and worried the rally had been overdone.

"The market basically took a big pause," said David Kelly, chief market strategist at JPMorgan Funds. He said stocks had drifted too far and were due for a bounce. "Any sign that a normal economy might get re-established should push the market higher."

Investors latched on to Whitney's comments because she has for years offered one of the more pessimistic—and accurate—assessments of the banking business.

Goldman has long been considered the strongest bank in the recession, but Bank of America has been one of the hardest hit by loan losses. Any improvement in banks' profits could shore up their financial

position and free money for lending, which could have a positive ripple effect on other industries in need of financing.

Beyond Goldman, Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase & Co., and Citigroup Inc. are all scheduled to report second-quarter results this week. Banks have taken some of the biggest blows since the recession began in late 2007 as investment and loan losses mounted.

"There is a contingency of traders out there that believe the market can't recover without financials," said Randy Frederick, director of trading and derivatives at Charles Schwab.

The Dow rose 185.16, or 2.3 percent, to 8,331.68. The Standard & Poor's 500 index jumped 21.92, or 2.5 percent, to 901.05, its first finish over the 900 mark since July 1. It was the S&P's best day since June 1.

The Nasdaq composite index rose 37.18, or 2.1 percent, to 1,793.21 and also posted its best performance since the start of June.

Among financial stocks, Goldman rose \$7.57, or 5.3 percent, to \$149.44 and Bank of America rose \$1.11, or 9.3 percent, to \$12.99.

The KBW Bank Index, which tracks 24 of the nation's largest banks, rose 6.5 percent.

The short-term buy call on Goldman from Whitney comes after the stock has risen 72 percent this year, but investors appeared to be looking past the fact that it had already had such a big advance.

Many analysts had been expecting the company would turn in strong profits for the second quarter. Goldman last month repaid the \$10 billion it received last fall as part of the government's \$700 billion bank bailout program.

Banks have taken some of the biggest blows among U.S. companies since the recession began in late 2007 as investment and loan losses mounted.

Some financial stocks were still struggling, however. Commercial finance lender CIT Group Inc. said it is talking with regulators about ways to improve its short-

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In this July 8, 2009 photo, people sit at tables in front of the New York Stock Exchange. Stock futures traded higher Monday morning, July 13, 2009, as investors brace for a crush of earnings reports, including key readings from the banking sector, this week.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

term liquidity as recent losses may jeopardize its compliance with capital requirements. The stock fell 18 cents, or 11.8 percent, to \$1.35.

Earnings reports will give investors a chance to see whether there was any meaningful economic improvement during the second quarter. Reports are expected from major companies in a range of industries this week, including Johnson & Johnson, International Business Machines Corp., and General

Electric Co. and technology bellwethers Intel Corp. and Google Inc.

The S&P 500 index has fallen for four straight weeks as investors worried that a 40 percent rally from early March had been too quick.

The gains in stocks cooled demand for the safety of government debt, hurting prices and lifting yields. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note jumped to 3.35 percent from 3.30 percent late Friday. □

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Jackson 'wasn't ready' for London comeback: father



Joe Jackson, father of the late Michael Jackson, leaves the Jackson family home in a Rolls Royce in Encino, California, on July 7, 2009 to attend his son's memorial service. The father of Michael Jackson slammed the grueling 50-date schedule drawn up for his son's comeback on Monday, saying the star was not capable of completing the series of sold-out concerts.

(AFP/File/Paul J. Richards)

LOS ANGELES (AFP) – The father of Michael Jackson slammed the grueling 50-date schedule drawn up for his son's comeback on Monday, saying the star was not capable of completing the series of sold-out concerts.

In an interview aired by ABC News, Joe Jackson said he had harbored concerns about his son's schedule, which had been due to get underway in

London on July 13 until the tragic King of Pop died on June 25.

Jackson, 79, said his son had initially only wanted to perform in 10 concerts before more dates were added.

"Michael only agreed to 10 shows. Then they went and added all these shows," Joe Jackson told ABC News.

"I was worried about his health because all the shows

I'm seeing, no artist can do all those shows, back-to-back like that. I knew Michael couldn't do all those shows without a rest in between."

Jackson's misgivings were echoed by his son's financial advisor Leonard Rowe, who also told ABC News that the star was in no condition to make a comeback, describing reports that he was in good shape as "totally untrue."

"Michael Jackson was not ready. He was not fit. If you can call weighing about 110 to 115 pounds fit. Besides that MJ told me himself that he never wanted to do 50 shows he only wanted to do 10," Rowe told ABC.

Randy Phillips, chief of concert promoters AEG Live, told ABC that it had been Michael Jackson's idea to increase the original run of concerts from 31 to 50, saying the singer would have been averaging under three shows a week.

"If that was too many, then one would have been too many," Phillips said.

Jackson's physical condition

in the days leading up to his death last month has been the subject of intense debate, with sharply different versions offered by the singer's associates.

Phillips had earlier said Jackson, 50, appeared to be in "fantastic" shape at a concert rehearsal on the eve of his death.

Another member of the

rehearsal, magician-comedian Ed Alonzo, said Jackson "looked great and had great energy."

However reports detailing alleged findings from Jackson's autopsy have painted a different picture, with CNN and ABC both reporting the star's body was riddled with needle marks and had several collapsed veins. □

Baron Cohen's 'Bruno' bows to \$30.6M debut

LOS ANGELES – Sacha Baron Cohen's "Bruno" strutted to a first-place finish at the weekend box office with a \$30.6 million debut.

The top 20 movies at U.S. and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by Hollywood.com:

1. "Bruno," Universal, \$30,619,130, 2,756 locations, \$11,110 average, \$30,619,130, one week.
2. "Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs," Fox, \$27,607,497, 4,102 locations, \$6,730 average, \$119,680,193, two weeks.
3. "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen," Paramount, \$24,213,875, 4,293 locations, \$5,640 average, \$339,221,800, three weeks.
4. "Public Enemies," Universal, \$13,794,240, 3,336 locations, \$4,135 average, \$66,221,110, two weeks.
5. "The Proposal," Disney, \$10,603,884, 3,158 locations, \$3,358 average, \$113,861,076, four weeks.
6. "The Hangover," Warner Bros., \$9,933,238, 3,002 locations, \$3,309 average, \$222,444,906, six weeks.
7. "I Love You, Beth Cooper," Fox, \$4,919,433, 1,858 locations, \$2,648 average, \$4,919,433, one week.
8. "Up," Disney, \$4,715,746, 2,201 locations, \$2,143 average, \$273,834,761, seven weeks.
9. "My Sister's Keeper," Warner Bros., \$4,294,382, 2,444 locations, \$1,757 average, \$35,915,782, three weeks.
10. "The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3," Sony, \$1,543,516, 1,116 locations, \$1,383 average, \$61,437,955, five weeks.
11. "Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian," Fox, \$1,452,662, 854 locations, \$1,701 average, \$170,485,184, eight weeks.
12. "Star Trek," Paramount, \$1,164,416, 763 locations, \$1,526 average, \$251,970,795, 10 weeks.
13. "Year One," Sony, \$1,000,581, 990 locations, \$1,011 average, \$41,192,481, four weeks.
14. "Away We Go," Focus, \$728,773, 406 locations, \$1,795 average, \$7,420,575, six weeks.
15. "Whatever Works," Sony Pictures Classics, \$678,055, 320 locations, \$2,119 average, \$3,099,917, four weeks.
16. "Moon," Sony Pictures Classics, \$674,900, 247 locations, \$2,732 average, \$1,785,478, five weeks.
17. "The Hurt Locker," Summit, \$641,168, 60 locations, \$10,686 average, \$1,101,834, three weeks.
18. "Land of the Lost," Universal, \$352,125, 313 locations, \$1,125 average, \$48,184,350, six weeks.
19. "Cheri," Miramax, \$344,027, 173 locations, \$1,989 average, \$1,568,767, three weeks.
20. "Angels & Demons," Sony, \$338,922, 282 locations, \$1,202 average, \$131,910,770, nine weeks. □

Vatican lauds good/evil theme in Harry Potter film

VATICAN CITY – The Vatican lauded the latest Harry Potter film on Monday, saying "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" made the age-old debate over good vs. evil crystal clear.

The Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano even gave two thumbs up to the film's treatment of adolescent love, saying it achieved the "correct balance" and made the stars more credible to the general audience.

The newspaper said the film, which opens Wednesday, was the best adaptation yet of the J.K. Rowling series about the adventures of the bespectacled child wizard Harry Potter and his Hogwarts chums as they battle Harry's nemesis, the evil sorcerer Voldemort.

While criticizing Rowling for omitting any explicit "reference to the transcendent" in her books, L'Osservatore said the latest installment nevertheless makes clear that good should overcome evil "and that sometimes this



Actors Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, and Rupert Grint attend the "Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince" premiere after party at American Museum of Natural History on July 9, 2009 in New York City. British actress Natalia Tena has become famous for her witchery as a Harry Potter sidekick, and co-star of the three.

(AFP/Getty Images/File/Stephen Lovekin)

requires costs and sacrifice."

"In addition, the spastic search for immortality epitomized by Voldemort is stigmatized," the review said.

The Vatican's praise follows the sharp criticism of the Harry Potter series by a conservative Austrian priest at the center of a church crisis earlier this year. The Rev. Gerhard Maria Wagner had characterized Harry Potter

novels as Satanism, while also suggesting Hurricane Katrina, which ravaged New Orleans and surrounding areas, was provoked by sin.

Pope Benedict XVI promoted Wagner to the post of auxiliary bishop in Linz, Austria's third largest city, in January. But amid an outcry among Austrian Catholics over his comments, Wagner eventually gave up the promotion. □

Sunset Grille, a prime Steakhouse offering Spa Cuisine



Palm Beach – The Sunset Grille at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa needs no introduction. The award winning American steakhouse with its chic, cosmopolitan atmosphere headlines Prime Beef, the highest grade U.S.D.A -- only 2% of all beef is graded prime, required to age a minimum of 4 weeks. While steaks and chops make up the heart of the menu, the resort's Restaurant Chef Maarten Smeets innovated

unparalleled appetizers and extraordinary desserts, which helped the Sunset Grille achieve the Triple AAA's elite four-diamond status – a rare feat for steakhouses.

Sunset Grille well-known as the number one steakhouse in Aruba offers also spa cuisine, for the health conscious visitors, featuring appetizers, salads and a wide array of seafood selections.

The spa cuisine dishes are balanced by enhancing

flavors with citrus, spice and herbs and taste is elevated by marinating, smoking and grilling, Smeets explains.

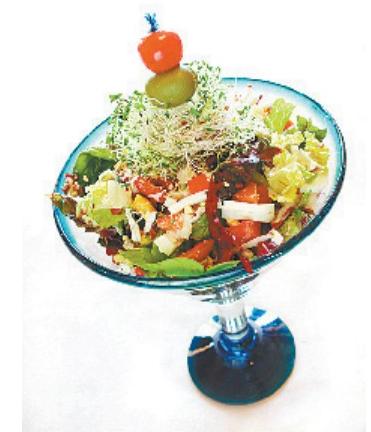
"We now use many more herbs, vegetables, grains and fibers," he adds, "all designed to sustain a healthier life style; and we stay away from saturated fats and refined sugars, as well as use salt sparingly," he informs.

"The Sunset Grille kitchen," Smeets reveals, "uses no trans fats, and our guests," he banters, "stay healthy, wealthy and wise with our new and exciting spa cuisine."

Among the patrons favorite dishes are, the Sunset Grille's famous Chop House Martini Salad, "Shaken not Stirred," the lobster bisque with a pastry crust, the various cuts of prime beef, the popular Rack of Lamb, Stuffed Quail and the delicious Veal Oscar. The spa cuisine features items such as Tuna Tataki, the Spinach Salad, Chilean Seabass, grilled Swordfish and the Asian style Salmon



to cut corners, especially when it comes to buying, aging and cutting meat. No wonder the readers of Caribbean Travel & Life named it the top restaurant in the Caribbean. □



Fun Island Living, at T.H. Palm & Company



Palm Beach-- The beautiful T.H. Palm & Company offers an exceptional, upscale shopping experience aptly described as "Fun Island Living."

Owned by long time Aruba resident Jodi Tobman who has several other boutiques on the island, Jodi reports she had a lot of fun creating this magnificent jewel of a boutique which first opened its doors in June of 2004.

A wide variety of distinctive items

are on display on interesting antique décor pieces, from luscious silk tropical shirts for men to stylish resort wear and exclusive artisan jewelry for women. The theme of "Fun Island Living" is apparent in the wide selection of accessories for home including tropical barware and serving pieces, books, artwork and lamps. There are handbags "to live for" and an array of gifts for children of all ages as well as a variety of novelty gift items for pets.

When visiting T.H. Palm & Company, we suggest you take your time as you will need to browse from floor to ceiling in order not to miss anything. Larger items can be shipped to your home address at a nominal fee and shipping is always an available option.

For those who find it hard to choose from among all the enchanting objects in stock or for those who do

not have time to shop, a Personal Shopper service is available to assist at no extra charge, by appointment, please.

T.H. Palm & Company is conveniently located in front of the Playa Linda Beach Resort and offers late night shopping and convenient parking. Open daily from 9 a.m. - 10 p.m. Fridays open until 11 p.m. Telephone +297 586 8909. Email: orders@sala manderholdings.com □



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tributed on five (5) floors. The one, two and three bedroom suites have a perfect view of the ocean and beach. The units include, among other amenities, floor to ceiling glass doors and panoramic windows, spacious terraces, marble bathrooms, European kitchens

with granite counter tops and a full stainless steel appliance package including washer and dryer. This 35-condominium complex will feature a beautiful swimming pool with a beach style entry with waterfalls and fountain and state of the art fiber optic lighting. The entrance of the building has a drive-up covered entrance and an elegant two-story lobby leading to the sun-filled hallways and corridors. The common area will facilitate the owners with a well-equipped gym overlooking the gardens and the pool.

The garden will feel like an oasis true to the project's name. There will also be a recreation room and sofas throughout the common area to lounge and relax. Further amenities include a 24/7 security, a full concierge and a rental program for the owners who want to earn a return on their investment. The concierge service will be helpful to assist the owners in making their 'homecoming' a very pleasant return. Each condo will have one designated parking space exclusive to the owners. Construction on Oasis at Eagle

Beach is moving fast. Fifteen of the thirty-five units have already been sold. The condominiums will be ready for occupancy by March 2010. Oasis is located on Eagle Beach which allows for an easy access, even on foot, to the best casinos, restaurants, golf courses, shopping areas and night life the Aruba has to offer.

The experienced sales team of Oasis invites you for a visit to learn about this new gem on the beach.

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the same day. Herby loves to share his fishing passion with the many visitors to the island. His fleet of a 35 ft. Twin Engine Bertram yacht and a 50 ft. Twin Engine Post yacht, appropriately called "Driftwood I and II", is available for charters on a daily basis from 8am to

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On Top Of The News

Email: news@arubatoday.com

Tuesday, July 14, 2009



FILE - This March 20, 2001 file photo, shows President George W. Bush, right, and George J. Tenet, left, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, stop to pose standing the CIA seal in the main entrance of agency headquarters in Langley, Va. The President made a visit to greet CIA employees and thank them for their service to their country and spoke of the importance of intelligence collection and analysis. A secret intelligence program canceled by CIA Director Leon Panetta in June was meant to find and then capture or kill al-Qaida leaders at close range rather than target them with air strikes that risked civilian casualties, government officials with knowledge of the operation said Monday, July 13, 2009. Panetta canceled the effort on June 23 after learning of its existence, its failure to yield results, and the fact that Congress had been unaware of the program since its inception after the Sept. 11, terrorist attacks in 2001, according to one official with direct knowledge of the plan.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

Officials:

CIA program targeted al-Qaida leaders

By PAMELA HESS,
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — A secret intelligence program canceled by CIA Director Leon Panetta in June was meant to find and then capture or kill al-Qaida leaders at close range rather than target them with air strikes that risked civilian casualties, government officials with knowledge of the operation said Monday. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the program, said the spy agency's program never got off the ground.

Panetta canceled the effort on June 23 after learning of its existence, its failure to yield results, and the fact that Congress had been unaware of the program since its inception

in 2001, according to one official with direct knowledge of the plan.

That official said former President George W. Bush authorized killing al-Qaida leaders shortly after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, and that Congress was made aware of that. However, the official said, Panetta also told members of Congress that according to notes that he had been given on the early months of the program, then-Vice President Dick Cheney directed the CIA not to inform Congress of the specifics of the secret program.

Panetta told the committees there was no indication that there was anything illegal or inappropriate about the effort itself, the official said.

Continued on Page B4

Motive probed in slaying of Fla. pair with 16 kids



This 2005 picture shows Byrd and Melanie Billings with their children, 10 adopted and two biological, at their home in Beulah, Fla. Melanie is holding a photograph of their late child, Bailey. Investigators asked the public to be on the lookout Friday, July 10, 2009 for a red van they believe carried three men involved in the deaths of the Florida Panhandle couple who were shot in their rural home while eight of their children slept.

(AP Photo/The Pensacola News Journal, Karena Cawthon)

By MELISSA NELSON,
Associated Press Writer

PENSACOLA, Fla. — Investigators were looking at business ties for a possible motive in the slaying of a wealthy Florida couple known for adopting 12 children with developmental disabilities and other problems, authorities said Monday. More arrests are possible after three men were jailed Sunday, two on murder charges, in the shooting deaths of Byrd and Melanie Billings at their sprawling nine-bedroom home near Pensacola, Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan said.

Continued on Page B3



STS-127 Mission Specialist Julie Payette, of Canada, front, waves as she walks with fellow Mission Specialists, from left, Tom Marshburn, Dave Wolf, and Flight Engineer Tim Kopra, out of the Operations and Checkout Building for a trip to Launch Pad 39-A Sunday July 12, 2009 at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla. Seven astronauts are scheduled to liftoff onboard the space shuttle Endeavour this evening for a trip to the international space station.

(AP Photo/Chris O'Meara)

NASA to make fifth attempt to launch Endeavour

by Jean-Louis Santini
CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AFP) — The US space agency will make a fifth attempt to launch the space shuttle Endeavour Monday after a fourth scheduled takeoff a day earlier was cancelled because of stormy weather.

The shuttle launch was rescheduled for 6:51 pm (2251 GMT), but forecasters said the likelihood of favorable weather conditions was just 40 percent, far below the 70 percent forecast leading up to Sunday's scrapped attempt.

Continued on Next Page

Obama chooses Ala doctor as next surgeon general



President Barack Obama, left, congratulates Dr. Regina Benjamin, center, as Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius applauds, following Obama's announcement of his nomination of Benjamin to the post of Surgeon General, Monday, July 13, 2009, in the White House Rose Garden in Washington.

(AP Photo/Haraz N. Ghanbari)

By LAURAN NEERGAARD,
AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama turned to the Deep South for the next surgeon general, choosing a rural Alabama family physician who made headlines with fierce determination to rebuild her nonprofit medical clinic in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Dr. Regina Benjamin is known along Alabama's impoverished Gulf Coast as a country doctor who makes house calls and doesn't turn away patients who can't pay — even as she's had to find the money to rebuild a clinic repeatedly destroyed by hurricanes and once even fire. "For all the tremendous obstacles that she has overcome, Regina Benjamin also represents what's best about health care in America, doctors and nurses who give and care and sacrifice for the sake of their patients," Obama said Monday in introducing his choice for a job known as America's doctor.

He said Benjamin will bring insight as his administration struggles to revamp the health care system:

Saying she "has seen in a very personal way what is broken about our health care system," Obama said Benjamin will bring important insight as his administration tries to revamp that system.

Benjamin called the job "a physician's dream," and pledged to be a voice for

patients in need — and to fight the preventable diseases that claim too many lives each year, including nearly her entire family.

Her father died with diabetes and high blood pressure, her only brother of HIV, her mother of lung cancer "because as a young girl, she wanted to smoke just like her twin brother could" — an uncle now on oxygen as a result, she noted.

"I cannot change my family's past. I can be a voice in the movement to improve our nation's health care and our nation's health," Benjamin said. "I want to be sure that no one falls through the cracks as we improve our health care system." The surgeon general is the people's health advocate, a bully pulpit position that can be tremendously effective with a forceful personality. Benjamin has that reputation. Pushed by the need in her own shrimping community of Bayou La Batre, Ala., and its diverse patient mix — white, black and, increasingly immigrants from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos — Benjamin, 51, has emerged as a national leader in the call to improve health disparities. She became the first black woman and the first doctor under age 40 elected to the American Medical Association's board of trustees, and in 2002 became the first black woman to head a state medical society.

"She's always been very

ambitious from a political standpoint. She has always, always been motivated by that ambition," said Dr. James Holland, CEO of Mostellar Medical Center in nearby Irvington, Ala., where Benjamin spent about three years in the early 1980s as a National Health Service Corps scholar.

Holland said Benjamin's selection as surgeon general "doesn't surprise me at all. The only thing that surprises me is that it hasn't happened before now."

Medical groups welcomed her ability for straight-talk, whether to patients or politicians, about the dire health needs of much of the country.

"We want to emphasize prevention, primary care and early intervention, and we have somebody now who does that for a living," said Dr. Georges Benjamin, no relation, of the American Public Health Association.

Added AMA President Dr. James Rohack, who has known Benjamin for more than two decades. With "her recognition that if you don't have health insurance, you live sicker and you die younger, she can bring the real-world perspective as surgeon general of the things as a nation we need to do to keep ourselves healthy."

Benjamin made headlines in the wake of Katrina, as photographs showed her laying patient charts out to bake in the sun and lamenting the lack of pricey but more hurricane-resistant electronic records. Her nonprofit clinic was rebuilt by volunteers only to burn down just as it was about to reopen. Benjamin later told of her patients' desperation that she rebuild again, recalling on woman who handed her an envelope with a \$7 donation to help.

"If she can find \$7, I can figure out the rest," Benjamin said last fall as she received a \$500,000 MacArthur Foundation "genius award," money she said she'd use to help finish that job. □



Storm clouds over the NASA Vehicle Assembly building at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The US space agency is to make a fifth attempt to launch the space shuttle Endeavour after stormy weather forced the postponement of its mission to the International Space Station four times.

(AFP/Getty Images/Chip Somodevilla)

ENDEAVOUR

Continued from Page B1

Still, NASA began fueling at 9:33 am (1333 GMT) in preparation for the third attempt since Saturday to launch the Endeavour on a mission to the International Space Station (ISS) to assemble the Japanese Kibo laboratory.

"If a new technical issue crops up or rain gets into the thruster, teams will look to target launch for Tuesday," NASA said on its website, referring to a partially unattached Tyvek cover used to keep rain and debris out of one of Endeavour's thrusters. The risk of a storm system developing within 20 miles (36 kilometers) of launchpad 39A, where the Endeavour and its seven-astronaut crew are waiting to take off, is the main concern, meteorologist Scott McCormick told AFP.

Florida's tropical climate in summer is often unstable in the afternoon with frequent rapidly-forming storm systems.

Sunday's cancellation was caused by thunderstorms and rain developing in the late afternoon near the launch site. "Looks like the team is ready but the weather is not. At this time we are no-go," the US space agency's launch director Pete Nickolenko said with just minutes to go before liftoff.

The Endeavour crew left the launch pad at about 8:35 pm (0035 GMT Monday) and returned to crew quarters at the Kennedy Space Center for the night.

Lightning strikes were responsible for the third of four delays to Endeavour's mission on Saturday.

A Friday night storm produced at least 11 lightning strikes around the shuttle's pad, but did not damage the spacecraft.

Take-off had been delayed twice before, when potentially hazardous fuel leaks were discovered, apparently caused by a misaligned plate linking a hydrogen gas vent line with the external fuel tank.

The US space agency said the problem had been fixed, and had filled Endeavour's external fuel tanks with some two million liters (half a million gallons) of low-temperature liquid hydrogen on Sunday before the launch was scrapped.

Endeavour's crew -- including six Americans and one Canadian -- are expected to install a platform on the ISS for astronauts to conduct experiments in the vacuum of space, 350 kilometers (220 miles) above Earth's surface. Canadian Julie Payette, an electrical and information engineer, is to be the only woman on board.

She has been into space before, as have two other members of the crew, including shuttle commander Mark Polansky. The crew's four other members will be on their maiden space voyage.

American aerospace engineer Tim Kopra, 46, will replace Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata, spending several months aboard the floating space station.

He would be the latest addition to the permanent crew of the ISS, which is a joint collaboration between 16 different countries.

The astronauts were also



This 2005 picture shows Byrd and Melanie Billings at their home in Beulah, Fla. Investigators asked the public to be on the lookout Friday, July 10, 2009 for a red van they believe carried three men involved in the deaths of the Florida Panhandle couple who were shot in their rural home while eight of their children slept.

(AP Photo/The Pensacola News Journal, Karena Cawthon)

FLORIDA SLAYING

Continued from Page B1

"It began as what we thought was a home invasion," Morgan said on NBC's "Today" show. "At this point because of the complexity and the ties this family had through the business community, we're moving many other directions. Could be money, could be a whole host of things."

Byrd and Melanie Billings owned several local businesses, including a finance company and a used car dealership.

Three men arrested in connection with the slayings were scheduled to appear in court Monday and Tuesday.

Day laborer Wayne Coldiron, 41, turned himself in to

Escambia County authorities and Leonard P. Gonzalez Jr., 35, was arrested in neighboring Santa Rosa County. Both were charged with murder and home invasion, according to their arrest warrants.

Authorities also jailed Gonzalez's father, Leonard P. Gonzalez Sr., on a charge of evidence tampering. Police said the 56-year-old tried to paint over and hide damage on a red van that was spotted on surveillance video leaving the Billings' home after the shootings Thursday. Tips from the public led investigators to the van Saturday.

The Billingses had a total of 16 children, eight of whom were in the house when their parents were shot.

Ashley Markham, an adult daughter, said the adopted children are together with friends and family at an undisclosed location. She said she had no knowledge of any connection between the three men in custody and her parents or any of the children in the household.

She also said she planned to carry on with her parents' legacy.

"My mother always told me some people grow up wanting to be doctors or lawyers or teachers. She wanted to be a mommy," Markham said in a statement provided by her attorney.

"Her lifelong dream was loving her babies and being a voice for them."

The Billingses were known for providing a home in a rural area near the Alabama

line for children with autism, Down syndrome and other developmental problems.

The extensive surveillance system that captured the break-in was installed to help them keep track of their children as they wandered through the large house and yard, said Susan Berry, principal of Escambia Westgate School in Pensacola, which some of the children attended.

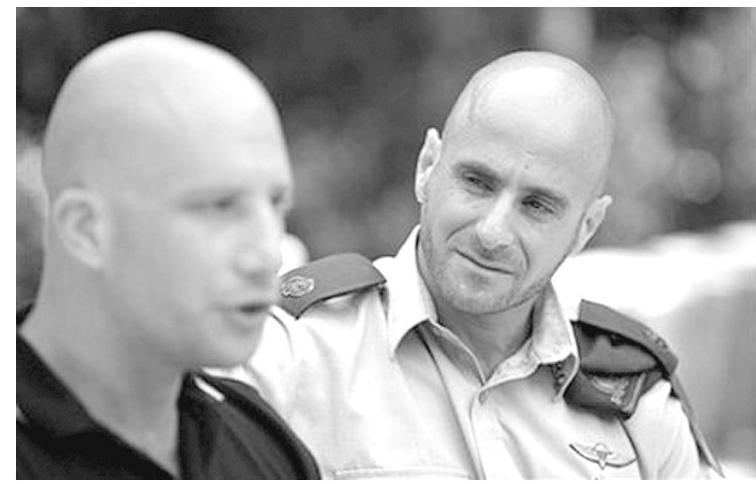
"Some of the children were very inquisitive, as all children are curious," Berry said. "They wanted to make sure they had an eye on the children."

Surveillance footage released to the media showed three armed, masked suspects arriving in the red van, entering the house and then returning to the vehicle, according to arrest warrants.

The elder Gonzalez told investigators that he was the getaway driver and waited in the van while the others broke into the house and burglarized it, according to the warrants. He also told police several other men were involved.

Investigators described a complex web of connections between the suspects but said there was no indication they knew the Billingses, whom Berry described as a generous, happy couple who always found room for one more child.

A family photo in the Pensacola News Journal in 2005 said it all: a baby in Melanie's lap, a baby in Byrd's lap, another baby in the oldest daughter's lap and the rest of the children piled between them. □



In this June 11, 2009 photo, Israeli army Maj. Yoni Schoenfeld, right, listens to his partner Noam during an interview with the Associated Press in Tel Aviv, Israel.

(AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

Allies' stance cited in US gays-in-military debate

By DAVID CRARY,

AP National Writer

NEW YORK — When it comes to dealing with gay personnel in the ranks, the contrasts are stark among some of the world's proudest, toughest militaries — and these differing approaches are invoked by both sides as Americans renew debate over the Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

In the United States, more than 12,000 service members — including dozens of highly trained Arabic linguists — have been dismissed since 1994 because it became known they were gay. Current targets for discharge include a West Point graduate and Iraq war veteran, Army National Guard Lt. Dan Choi, and a veteran of combat missions over Iraq and Afghanistan, Air Force Lt. Col. Victor Fehrenbach.

In Britain, on the other hand, gay and lesbian service members marched in crisp uniforms in the annual Pride London parade July 4. Gay Australian soldiers and sailors had their own float in Sydney's Gay Mardi Gras parade. In Israel, the army magazine earlier this year featured two male soldiers on the cover, hugging one another. America's "don't ask, don't tell" policy — which prohibits gays from serving openly in the armed forces — is the target of intensifying opposition, and President Barack Obama says he favors lifting the ban. But he wants to win over skeptics in Congress and the Pentagon, and a fierce debate lies ahead that will inevitably touch on the experiences of allied nations that have no bans. □

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Sotomayor pledges impartial justice if confirmed



Supreme Court nominee Judge Sonia Sotomayor smiles on Capitol Hill in Washington, Monday, July 13, 2009, prior to testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on her nomination.

By DAVID ESPO and
MARK SHERMAN,
Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON — Her confirmation all but assured, Sonia Sotomayor pledged Monday to serve the “larger interest of impartial justice” rather than any narrower cause if she becomes the first Hispanic on the Supreme Court.

“My personal and professional experiences help me listen and understand, with the law always commanding the result in every case,” Sotomayor told senators at a nationally televised confirmation hearing.

The remarks about judicial philosophy were her first since President Barack Obama nominated the South Bronx-born and Ivy League-educated

(AP Photo/Ron Edmonds)

veteran of 17 years on the federal bench. They appeared aimed at Republicans who have questioned her commitment to impartiality in light of a 2001 remark that experience as a “wise Latina” might give her an advantage over white males.

The 55-year-old appeals court judge spoke after several hours of speechmaking in which Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee praised her as a Hispanic pioneer well qualified for the high court and Republicans questioned her impartiality as well as President Barack Obama’s views in nominating her.

Despite GOP misgivings, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., told Sotomayor, “Unless you have a complete meltdown, you’re going to get confirmed.”

“And I don’t think you will” have a meltdown, he added quickly as Sotomayor sat listening, her face in a half-smile.

In her remarks, Sotomayor said, “The progression of my life has been uniquely American,” that of a child of Puerto Rican parents who moved to New York during World War II. “I want to make one special note of thanks to my mom,” she said. “I am here today because of her aspirations and sacrifices for my brother Juan and me.” “Mom, I love that we are sharing this together,” said Sotomayor, whose father died when she was 9.

The role of racial politics in the day’s proceedings became clear within minutes after Sen. Patrick Leahy, the committee chairman, rapped the opening gavel.

“She’s been a judge for all Americans. She’ll be a justice for all Americans,” said the Vermont Democrat.

Leahy likened Sotomayor to other judicial pioneers, citing Thurgood Marshall, the first black justice, as well as Louis Brandeis, the first Jew, and Sandra Day O’Connor, the first woman.

“Let no one demean this extraordinary woman,” Leahy said in a warning to committee Republicans to tread lightly in the days ahead.

Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama,

the senior Republican, vowed a “respectful tone” and “maybe some disagreements” when lawmakers begin questioning Sotomayor on Tuesday.

Moments later, he took aim at Sotomayor’s 2001 statement that her standing as a “wise Latina woman” would sometimes allow her to reach a better decision than a white male.

“I will not vote for, and no senator should vote for an individual nominated by any president who believes it is acceptable for a judge to allow their own personal background, gender, prejudices or sympathies to sway their decision,” he said.

“Call it empathy, call it prejudice or call it sympathy, but whatever it is, it’s not law,” Sessions said. “In truth, it’s more akin to politics, and politics has no place in the courtroom.”

That was a reference to Obama’s declaration — made before he named Sotomayor — that he wanted a person of empathy on the high court. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., made a spirited rebuttal later in the morning. “The empathy that President Obama saw in you has a constitutionally proper place” in the judiciary, he said. Obama named Sotomayor, 55 and a child of the South Bronx, to replace retiring Justice David Souter.

While Souter was appointed by President George H.W. Bush, a Republican, he became a reliable member of the court’s liberal faction.

If confirmed, Sotomayor is not expected to alter the court’s balance on controversial issues such as abortion and affirmative action.

Sotomayor, who has served 17 years as a federal judge, including 11 on the appeals court, listened silently from her seat at the witness table a few feet away as the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee made introductory remarks.

Her turn to speak came next, to be followed by two or three days of questioning from the panel that will cast the first votes on her appointment.

Leahy and Sessions escorted Sotomayor to her seat before the hearing began into the first Supreme Court nominee by a Democratic president in 15 years.

Other Republicans tried to straddle competing political demands, noting the historical nature of the occasion — Hispanics are the fastest growing portion of the electorate — while trying to keep faith with the criticisms raised by conservatives.

“I would hope every American is proud that a Hispanic woman has been nominated to sit on the Supreme Court,” said Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz. □



U.S. CIA Director Leon Panetta talks before meeting Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, not shown, at the Malacanang Presidential Palace in Manila, Philippines on Sunday July 12, 2009. Panetta is in the country to discuss issues on regional security and international terrorism, a Philippine official said.

(AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

CIA PROGRAM

Continued from Page B1

CIA directors since 2001 agreed with Cheney’s decision not to inform Congress because the highly classified operation, described as “sporadic” and “embryonic,” never managed to turn up the intelligence needed to carry out a kill and was not considered a covert operation, according to a former intelligence official. That official also was not authorized to discuss the program and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Congress has a right to know everything the CIA does, but the president can by law limit those told about covert operations to just the top four members of the House and Senate from the two parties and the senior members of the intelligence committees. Democrats on the House intelligence committee are pushing for a legal provision that would require the president to brief both committees in their entirety more often, but the White House

has threatened to veto the move.

The Wall Street Journal, anonymously citing former intelligence officials, first reported Monday that the secret program was a plan to kill or capture al-Qaida operatives.

The Journal’s sources said the plan was an attempt to carry out a presidential finding authorized in 2001 by President George W. Bush.

The Journal said the agency spent money on planning and maybe some training for the highly classified effort, but it never became fully operational.

Most attempts to kill al-Qaida’s leaders, believed to be hiding in Pakistan’s troubled western border region, use armed drones because it is difficult terrain controlled by sometimes hostile armed tribes. But those strikes have sometimes killed and injured innocent civilians and have caused outrage in Pakistan.

The government official said the CIA effort was meant to avoid such collateral

damage.

Panetta revealed the CIA program to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees in emergency briefings he called June 24 and told them he had begun an internal inquiry to determine why Congress — and he — had not been told sooner.

His private revelation ignited a storm of protests from Democratic members of the House Intelligence Committee, who accused the CIA of lying to Congress. Some are calling for a congressional investigation.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., head of the Senate Intelligence Committee, suggested that the Bush administration broke the law by concealing a CIA counterterrorism program from Congress. Feinstein said the Bush administration’s failure to notify Congress about the 8-year-old counterterrorism program “is a big problem, because the law is very clear.” □

Pa. swim club accused of racism to ask kids back



Kelbin Carolina demonstrates in front of the Valley Club in Huntingdon Valley, Pa., in response to allegations that the swim club blocked a group of minority children from joining weekly swims at the pool, Thursday, July 9, 2009. The club returned the deposit paid by the Creative Steps day camp, of which the children are members, citing issues such as overcrowding at the club.

(AP Photo/Mark Stehle)

By RON TODT,
Associated Press Writer

PHILADELPHIA — A private suburban swim club accused of racism after it canceled the memberships of dozens of minority children says it will seek a meeting with the kids' camps to work out an agreement for them to return. Amy Goldman, a member of The Valley Club, said those able to attend a hastily called meeting Sunday afternoon voted unanimously in support of reinstating the memberships of the Creative Steps day camp and two other camps as long as safety issues, times and terms can be agreed upon. The Creative Steps camp had arranged for 65 mostly black and Hispanic children to swim each Monday afternoon at the gated Huntingdon Valley club, which is on a leafy hillside in a village straddling two overwhelmingly white townships. But after the group arrived June 29, camp director Alethea Wright said, several children reported hearing racial comments and some swim club members pulled their children out of the pool. The camp's \$1,950 was

refunded a few days later. The president of the swim club's board of directors, John Duesler, has said the decision was made out of safety considerations, not racial concerns.

"We have near-unanimous approval from our membership, so at this point we'll be figuring out ... how to approach all the camps and see how we can move forward," Duesler told WPVI-TV at the club's entrance on Sunday. The swim club has claimed it has a diverse, multiethnic membership, but Goldman, a member for two years, said she couldn't remember seeing a black member this year.

Goldman said members were told that the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, which has opened an investigation, is to make a fact-finding visit to the club July 30. U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter, D-Pa., said Friday he had asked the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate "to determine what action, if any, is warranted by the Civil Rights Division."

Others to criticize the

club include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the United States' highest-profile black swimmer, Olympic gold medalist Cullen Jones, who said Thursday that "hearing about what's happened to these 65 kids is both disturbing and appalling."

Chuck Wielgus, executive director of USA Swimming, the governing body for the U.S. swim team, said he was stunned by the accusations against the club.

Wright, the camp director, didn't immediately return a telephone call seeking comment Sunday evening. She said earlier that other institutions had offered to host her group at their pools for the summer.

Camp parent Silvia Carvalho said she hadn't heard about the club's action but didn't believe her 9-year-old daughter, Araceli, would be willing to return.

"She has already said so," Carvalho said Sunday night. "She doesn't want people to look at her the same way." □

Baby cut from womb turns 1; a grandfather grieves

By DAN NEPHIN,
Associated Press Writer

MCKEESPORT, Pa. — Terrell Kian Johnson is turning 1 on Wednesday. It's also the first anniversary of the day his mother died — when she was kidnapped and bound with duct tape and Terrell sliced from her womb.

Now the woman's father, 47-year-old Eric Johnson, is raising Terrell and trying to plan his first birthday party, complete with cake and maybe a clown, but also a day for profound grief.

"It was a birthday and a death. ... It's a wee bit hard to swallow," said Johnson, of McKeesport.

Kia Johnson was 18 years old and 36 weeks pregnant when authorities say 40-year-old Andrea Curry-Demus abducted her.

The two met at the Allegheny County jail, where Johnson was visiting her baby's father and Curry-Demus was visiting another inmate. Prosecutors say Curry-Demus somehow lured the young woman to her suburban Pittsburgh apartment to steal the baby, then tried to pass off Johnson's son as her own, according to authorities.

It wasn't the first time Curry-Demus allegedly tried to take a baby. She's being held in a state mental hospital until a judge decides whether she can become competent to stand trial.

While Johnson waits for justice for his daughter, he tries to focus on his grandson, named after Kia and the baby's father, who is serving a five- to 10-year sentence for robbery. Johnson is raising Kian with his cousin.

"I can't wait till I can take him fishing, do the camping thing."

I just wish my daughter was here to share that with us," Johnson said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

The killing left him so depressed that he quit his job as a customer service representative. He can't sleep. Sometimes, he finds himself sitting outside, waiting for his daughter to return.

"I don't have it no more ... took the whole world out of me," he said, acknowledging that having Terrell around sometimes takes the edge off the pain.

"He's the happiest little baby; he just laughs all the time. There ain't nothing but Jesus flowing through him," Johnson said, fighting back tears. "I just thank God that we have him." □

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AP IMPACT: Crooked Afghan police challenge Marines



In this photo taken on July 7, 2009, Afghan police officers sit in the back of a police truck, as a U.S. Marine is seen in the foreground in Aynak, Helmand province south of Kabul, Afghanistan. Afghan villagers have complained repeatedly to Marines that the Afghan police force steals from them and beats them.

(AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

By JASON STRAZIUSO and DAVID GUTTENFELDER, Associated Press Writers

AYNAK, Afghanistan – Afghan villagers had complained to the U.S. Marines

for days: The police are the problem, not the Taliban. They steal from villagers and beat them. Days later, the Marines learned firsthand what the villagers meant.

As about 150 Marines and Afghan soldiers approached the police headquarters in the Helmand River town of Aynak, the police fired four gunshots at the combined force. No larger fight broke out, but once inside the headquarters the Marines found a raggedy force in a decrepit mud-brick compound that the police used as an open-pit toilet.

The meeting was tense. Some police were smoking pot. Others loaded their guns in a threatening manner near the Marines. The U.S. troops ousted the police two days later and installed a better trained force they had brought with them on their recently launched operation into southern Helmand. The original force was sent away for several weeks of training the U.S. is conducting across Afghanistan to professionalize the country's police.

But the encounter, witnessed last week by The Associated Press, highlights one of the largest problems facing the international effort to stabilize Afghanistan in the face of an increasingly violent Taliban insurgency: the need for competent, trustworthy police. What many villagers see now is the opposite — a pot-smoking, ragtag, thieving force that makes the Taliban look disciplined in comparison.

Afghans across the country complain bitterly about the country's police, whose junior ranks earn only about \$150 a month. Police pad their salaries by demanding bribes at checkpoints or kickbacks to investigate complaints, and police in opium poppy-growing regions turn a blind eye to drug smuggling for a cut of the profits, many Afghans complain.

The role of the local police is especially sensitive here in Helmand province, the center of the lucrative opium poppy industry and a Taliban stronghold. A main goal of the ongoing U.S. military operation is to restore Afghan

government control — which requires a disciplined police force that commands public respect. Over the past year, the Interior Ministry has tried to overhaul the police, and dozens of corrupt officials have been fired. The U.S. has faced similar problems in Iraq, where years of effort have so far failed to produce a police force with the same level of skill and professionalism as the Iraqi army.

Some 4,000 of the 21,000 additional troops President Barack Obama ordered to Afghanistan this year will train Afghan police and soldiers, a belated boost to a lingering problem. U.S. commanders have long complained of a shortage of trainers.

As Capt. Drew Schoenmaker pulled his men out of Aynak's police compound after that first meeting, the company commander told his Marines to "watch my 6 o'clock" — his back — in case the police again opened fire.

"I don't trust a single one of them," Schoenmaker muttered quietly. "We had some complaints about the police force and the ways they did business," Schoenmaker said later. "As I met the police force for the first time, there was an air of tension between us. We had received shots from their vicinity that day."

The police commander told Schoenmaker his men had fired on the U.S.-Afghan force because he didn't know who they were.

Two days later, the Marines made a second visit to the police headquarters. Schoenmaker's commander told him to kick the police out and install the new backup force. U.S. fighter aircraft patrolled overhead in case a fight broke out.

A Marine radio operator sat outside the compound as the police packed up. He got a report from a nearby unit that villagers complained that the police had just stolen jewelry and money from them. The ragtag force tore out of the compound, speeding their green, U.S.-bought Ford Rangers toward Helmand's provincial capital, just 10 miles to the north.

Police corruption has long been

a problem in Afghanistan. A 2007 International Crisis Group report entitled "Reforming Afghanistan's Police" found that Afghans often view the police "more as a source of fear than of security." It said ending corruption was critical if police were to provide a "professional, consistent service to citizens."

The Marines landed in southern Helmand earlier this month as part of the largest Marine operation in Afghanistan since 2001. Within hours of their arrival bands of villagers told the Americans that the local police force was a bigger problem than the Taliban. Sgt. Bill Cahir, who heard some of the complaints, saw the candor as a good sign.

"It was encouraging that a big group was willing to sit down and talk with us," Cahir said. "And they were pretty candid talking about the corrupt local police."

One villager in Aynak, Ghulam Mohammad, who appeared to be in his mid-20s, said that villagers were happy with the Afghan army, but not the police. "We can't complain to the police because they take money and abuse people," he said. Helmand's provincial police chief, Gen. Asadullah Sherzad, said that Aynak was under threat from militants every day, and that "police who are in calm situations are different from police in constant gunbattles."

"For sure there were complaints from the local people about the police, because that was the front line," Sherzad said. "The people suffered from both sides, the enemy side and the police side. Sometimes there were ambushes, and battles were carried out in people's fields."

Sherzad said the old police force had been replaced by a new, well-trained force "who have uniforms and know how to use their equipment. They know how to behave."

The old force will now receive U.S.-sponsored training called "focused district development," a program that gives police eight weeks of intense U.S. training and continued oversight thereafter.

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Demjanjuk faces 27,900 accessory to murder counts

By ROLAND LOSCH,
Associated Press Writer

MUNICH — The legal saga of John Demjanjuk neared its final chapter as prosecutors set the stage for one of Germany's highest-profile war crime trials in years — formally charging the retired U.S. auto worker Monday with involvement in the murder of 27,900 people at a Nazi death camp.

The Ukrainian-born Demjanjuk was once sentenced in Israel to death, then acquitted by the country's Supreme Court in 1993 of being the notorious "Ivan the Terrible" at the Treblinka death camp. Now the 89-year-old stands accused of being part of the death machine at another camp in Poland — Sobibor — and a Germany more than 60 years removed from World War II will revisit the demons of its past once again.

For Germany, the decision to try Demjanjuk was swift: formal charges relating to his alleged time as a Sobibor guard in 1943 were filed just two months after Demjanjuk landed in the country after a lengthy but fruitless court battle to avoid deportation from the U.S.

Filing charges typically takes several months in Germany. Monday's move underlined authorities' determination to move forward with efforts to exact justice for Nazi-era atrocities.

"The effort to bring Demjanjuk to justice sends a very powerful message that the passage of time in no way diminishes the guilt of the perpetrator," said the top Nazi-hunter at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Efraim Zuroff, who described the charges as "an important step forward."

The Munich state court must now decide whether to accept the charges — typically a formality — and set a date for the trial. Court spokeswoman Margarete Noetzel said the trial was unlikely to start before the autumn.

Demjanjuk's son, John Demjanjuk Jr., described the charges as "a farce" and raised anew concerns over whether the 89-year-old's frail health would allow him a fair trial. The charges carry a maximum

sentence of 15 years in prison.

"As long as my father remains alive, we will defend his innocence as he has never hurt anyone anywhere," he told The Associated Press in an e-mail. "They have hurried to justify the deportation and the violation of his legal and human rights with sensational charges but it is all a farce and could never withstand the test of litigation."

Demjanjuk Jr. said his father is suffering from an incurable leukemic bone marrow disease. However, doctors earlier this month determined that Demjanjuk (dem-YAHN'-yuk) was fit to stand trial so long as court hearings do not exceed two 90-minute sessions per day. He has been in custody in Munich since his arrival May 12.

Elderly, frail Nazi suspects with health problems have stood trial in the past: in 2001, Anton Mallot, an 89-year-old former guard at the Theresienstadt fortress in then-occupied Czechoslovakia, sat through his trial in Munich in a wheelchair, connected to an IV drip. He was sentenced to life in prison for beating a Jewish inmate to death, and died a year later.

Legal wrangling over Demjanjuk and his alleged role in the Nazi death machine goes back to the 1970s.

Demjanjuk, who became a U.S. citizen after the war, had his citizenship revoked in 1981 after the U.S. Justice Department alleged that he hid his past as "Ivan the Terrible," a guard at Treblinka.

He was extradited to Israel, where he was found guilty in 1988 of war crimes and crimes against humanity. However, the conviction was overturned by the Israeli Supreme Court after evidence emerged from Soviet archives that "Ivan" was a different Ukrainian named Ivan Marchenko.

Demjanjuk's U.S. citizenship was restored but again revoked in 2002, based on fresh Justice Department evidence showing he concealed his service at Sobibor and other Nazi-run death and forced-labor camps from immigration officials.

A U.S. immigration judge

ruled in 2005 he could be deported to Germany, Poland or Ukraine. The case moved a decisive step forward when Munich prosecutors issued an arrest warrant for him in March.

Demjanjuk maintains that he was a Red Army soldier who spent the time as a prisoner of war and never hurt anyone.

But Nazi-era documents obtained by U.S. justice authorities and shared with German prosecutors include a photo ID identifying Demjanjuk as a guard at Sobibor and saying he was trained at an SS facility for Nazi guards at Trawniki, also in Nazi-occupied Poland. U.S. and German experts have declared the ID genuine.

In their March arrest warrant, prosecutors accused Demjanjuk of being an accessory to murder in 29,000 cases, representing the number of people who arrived there while he was alleged to be a camp guard. Some 250,000 people died in the camp's gas chamber from when it opened in 1942 until it was razed to the ground 18 months later.

However, that number was reduced in the charges because, of the people transported to Sobibor, "many did not survive the journey," said Anton Winkler, a spokesman for Munich prosecutors.

Winkler's office is handling the case because Demjanjuk spent time at a refugee camp in the Munich area after the war.

Alongside Demjanjuk's upcoming trial, other cases of alleged Nazi war crimes are working their way through the German legal system.

In Munich, 90-year-old German former army officer Josef Scheungraber is being tried on charges that he ordered the killings of 14 Italian civilians in 1944.

And last week, judges in western Germany ruled that 88-year-old Heinrich Boere, accused of murdering three Dutch civilians during World War II, will go to court after prolonged wrangling over whether he is fit for trial.

"This isn't about revenge. It's not about tormenting an old man — it's about justice,



FILE - In this May 3, 2006 file photo, John Demjanjuk, right, is questioned during a trial in Cleveland, Ohio, USA. German prosecutors on Monday July 13, 2009, formally charged John Demjanjuk with 27,900 counts of accessory to murder at a Nazi death camp during World War II. The 89-year-old retired auto worker, who was deported from the U.S. in May 2009, and is declared medically fit to stand trial for the alleged crimes at the Sobibor camp in Nazi-occupied Poland during World War II, but there is not yet a start date for the trial.

(AP Photo/Plain Dealer, C.H. Pete Copeland, File)

it's about determining guilt," said Dieter Graumann, vice president of Germany's Central Council of Jews. More important than whether Demjanjuk ultimately is sentenced to prison time is "that the guilt is determined, that it's discussed," Graumann said. "Now, at a time when there are so many Holocaust deniers ... it's all the more important that in such a trial it's made clear once again what happened, what took place," he said. □



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Colombia's President Alvaro Uribe, top, delivers a speech during a ceremony honoring victims of violence in Monteria, Colombia, Sunday, July 12, 2009.

(AP Photo/Fernando Vergara)

Gunmen kill policeman, wound 3 more in Tijuana

TIJUANA, Mexico — Gunmen opened fire on a patrol car in the drug-plagued border city of Tijuana, killing one police officer and wounding three more, authorities said Monday. Tijuana police said in a statement that Sunday's attack brings to 18 the number of officers that have been killed this year in the city across from San Diego.

Another attack against police wounded two bystanders on Saturday, the statement said.

Criminal gangs have increasingly targeted police across the country in recent weeks as President Felipe Calderon made arrests of cartel members a central part of his national campaign against organized crime.

A series of attacks across western Michoacan state this weekend killed five police officers and two soldiers. Police say drug traffickers were retaliating for the arrest of a main operative of the La Familia cartel, based in the state.

Drug violence has killed more than 11,000 people in Mexico since late 2006, when Calderon took office. □

Don't drink & DRIVE

"I feel that once I'm there I can really properly mourn her"

Colombia leader gives \$1M to victims of conflict

By FRANK BAJAK,
Associated Press

MONTERIA, Colombia — President Alvaro Uribe delivered reparations totaling nearly \$1 million on Sunday to 279 victims of Colombia's long-running conflict.

It was the second disbursement from \$100 million that his government has earmarked this year for 10,000 survivors of crimes by leftist rebels and far-right death squads known as "paramilitaries," both of which have been fed by drug trafficking.

Some 240,000 people have registered since the law facilitating the payments took effect last August. Victims of state security forces are not eligible for any of the estimated \$3.3 billion that the government says it expects to pay out over the coming decade.

Uribe acknowledged that the payments — the highest amount per victim or family is about \$9,150 — can't compensate for the loss of a loved one.

The reparations will instead

help prevent the pain of loss from "becoming converted into hate and vengeance," the president told recipients who were bused in from five states for a ceremony in this northwestern ranching region where the paramilitaries first arose in the 1980s.

Besides relatives of people murdered, those eligible include victims of torture, rape, forced recruitment and people driven from their homes by illegal armed groups. Recipients can still go to court to pursue damages directly from their tormenters.

Critics of Uribe, who disbursed the first payments on July 5, say he should back more extensive reparations, to include abuses by security forces.

But his allies in Congress have blocked a bill for expanded payments. Uribe has estimated that legislation's price tag at \$40 billion, which he says Colombia can ill afford, especially given the global recession. Among the recipients of reparations Sunday was Zoraya Silgado.

She said her then-35-year-old brother Ricardo was among six people killed in 1998 when rebels threw a grenade into a discotheque in San Onofre, a nearby town that was under a paramilitary reign of terror at the time.

He wasn't a party to the conflict, Silgado said. "He was just dancing."

Teofilo Racini Ortiz, 63, personally received his check from Uribe. He said his son Davis, 26, was "forcibly disappeared" in 2002 by thugs working for local paramilitary boss Salvatore Mancuso, who was extradited last year to the United States on drug-trafficking charges.

"He was a beauty of a kid," Racini said of his son, who drove a taxi owned by his father. Racini said he searched half of Colombia for Davis but never found a trace.

He laughed when asked about the indemnization.

"It doesn't replace a human being. No way. No how," Racini said.

"But it's a marvelous gesture." □

Relatives of plane crash victims travel to Comoros

PARIS — Relatives of those killed when a Yemenia Airways plane crashed two weeks ago traveled Monday to the Comoros Islands in hopes of finding peace after their losses, officials said.

Authorities, meanwhile, were still investigating the cause of the June 30 crash, from which a 12-year-old girl was the only survivor out of 153 aboard.

Yemenia chartered a French airplane on Monday to fly relatives of the victims of Yemenia Airways Flight 626 to the Indian Ocean islands. Yemenia's insurance company paid for the trip.

One passenger, Madaly Aicha, said before the flight left Paris that traveling to Comoros was the only way she could accept that her mother was lost in the crash.

"I feel that once I'm there I can really properly mourn her"

... for now she is only away," Aicha told Associated Press Television News.

Flight 626 went down on June 30 near Comoros, where it was to land in the city of Moroni after having taken off from San'a, Yemen. Many had been from the French Comoran community and had originally boarded the flight in Paris or in the southern French town of Marseille.

Monday's flight bringing relatives to mourn near the crash site was carrying around 180 people, including a French ambassador acting as intermediary and many who had boarded the plane during a stop in Marseille, according to the French Foreign Ministry. It said the plane would land Monday night in Comoros, and would be followed by a second one next week.

Investigators have found



Yemeni colleagues of the crew of the Yemenia Airways Flight 626, which crashed off the Indian Ocean archipelago of Comoros last week, protest outside the French embassy in San'a, Yemen, Wednesday, July 8, 2009. Relatives of the crew and Yemenia airways staff protested against the French search and investigation operation which they say was slow.

(AP Photo)

wreckage from Flight 626 near the coasts of Tanzania and Kenya, Yemen's aviation accident committee said. □

Mugabe says Zimbabwe constitution reforms to go ahead

By Nelson Banya

HARARE (Reuters) — Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe said on Monday a new constitution was necessary and strongly condemned clashes between political rivals that halted a conference aimed at drafting reforms.

A convention to draw up a new constitution descended into chaos on Monday as riot police broke up clashes between rival delegates, underscoring the tensions within a unity government Mugabe formed with arch-rival Morgan Tsvangirai in February.

Mugabe and Tsvangirai met to discuss the disturbances after riot police drove the delegates out of the venue and cordoned it off. The two, along with Arthur Mutambara who heads a splinter faction of Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), jointly addressed the media after their meeting.

"We are here to say that we will not brook any further disturbances in the future. We must have this constitution done, it's a necessity," Mugabe told reporters.

"We feel disturbed and we have a sense of abhorrence with what happened this morning. What happened is not in accordance with the letter and spirit of the global political agreement. This is not the time to be shouting insults to each other."

Tsvangirai said he hoped the parliamentary committee driving the constitutional reforms would regroup and resume the process.

"We had provided our people

with hope and we have people trying to undermine that hope," Tsvangirai said.

"I hope that the speaker of parliament and the parliamentary select committee can put the process back on rail as soon as possible because we need this constitution."

NATIONAL INTERESTS

Both Mugabe and Tsvangirai ruled out a probe into the causes of the disruptions, stressing it was important to move forward.

"The question of whoever orchestrated that disruption is neither here nor there, we need to move forward for the benefit of the people. Let us put national interests above partisan interests," Tsvangirai said.

The conference is part of a process which should lead to the adoption of a new national constitution and fresh elections in about two years.

But the chaos reflected the divisions within the coalition government set up in a bid to end political paralysis and reverse a decade of economic decline.

Zimbabweans hope a new charter, replacing one inked in 1979 before independence from Britain, will strengthen the role of parliament and curtail the president's powers, as well as guaranteeing civil liberties and political and media freedom.

Trouble broke out between delegates from Tsvangirai's MDC and Mugabe's ZANU-PF during an opening statement by the speaker of parliament.

When Lovemore Moyo, from Tsvangirai's MDC, got up to

deliver his opening speech, he was drowned out by youths singing revolutionary songs and delegates heckling each other.

The youths were waving fists, a traditional symbol of Mugabe's ZANU-PF party and singing the veteran leader's praises.

In a statement, the MDC earlier accused ZANU-PF lawmakers and officials of organizing youths to disrupt the conference.

"Judging by today's events, ZANU-PF MPs (members of parliament) and the party's delegates were clearly



Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe attends an international investment conference in the capital Harare July 9, 2009.

REUTERS/Philimon Bulawayo

reading from a script whose sole agenda is to derail the constitution-making process," the MDC said. □

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SPORTS

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Nationals fire manager Manny Acta

Bench coach Riggleman taking over on interim basis



WASHINGTON - So much for the plan to have Manny Acta's patient optimism lead the Washington Nationals out of the doldrums. The abysmal won-loss record became too much to stomach, costing him his job at the All-Star break and adding another layer of instability to the worst team in baseball.

Acta was fired Sunday night

after the team reached the unofficial halfway mark of the season with a 26-61 record, on pace to clear the 100-loss mark for the second consecutive year. Acting general manager Mike Rizzo -- himself an interim placeholder -- confirmed Acta's dismissal Monday morning in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

"I thank the Nationals for

giving me this opportunity and I'm sorry that things didn't work out as expected," Acta told ESPNdeportes.com. "It's normal for the manager to pay the price when the team is not doing well."

Bench coach Jim Riggleman will take over as interim manager, SI.com has learned. Riggleman has managed the Padres, Cubs and Mariners. Acta joins Colorado's Clint Hurdle and Arizona's Bob Melvin as major league managers who have been fired this season.

Acta was 158-252 over 2 1/2 seasons in his first managerial job, and the team's winning percentage dropped progressively from Year 1 until now, although his record had much to do with the talent -- or lack thereof -- assembled for him by the front office. The Nationals opened this season

without anything close to a reliable bullpen and fielded a lineup with numerous defensive liabilities. For a while, the starting pitching rotation consisted of four rookies and one second-year player.

Not surprisingly, the Nationals' 5.21 ERA is by far the worst in the National League, and their 82 errors are the most in baseball.

The team's only All-Star, third baseman Ryan Zimmerman, already has 12 errors, and the strain of endless losing began to show among many in the players in the form of fundamental mistakes in the field and at the plate.

Acta, however, remained upbeat, always preaching patience and emphasizing the importance of keeping an even keel -- so much so that some wondered whether he needed

to show more fire and perhaps be more critical publicly when his players made mistakes.

Acta's firing is only the latest example of the constant upheaval surrounding the Nationals since president Stan Kasten and local developer Ted Lerner took over the club during the 2006 season -- a sale that was supposed to finally bring a semblance of normalcy to the franchise.

Acta's staff had undergone a complete overhaul already, with every coach except pitching coach Randy St. Claire fired at the end of last season. St. Claire was dismissed at the beginning of June.

Now there is uncertainty on the bench to go along with Rizzo, who took over day-to-day duties shortly after Jim Bowden resigned during spring training. □

Tim Lincecum, Roy Halladay to start All-Star game

ST. LOUIS — Tim Lincecum and Roy Halladay were selected Monday as the starting pitchers for the All-Star game.

Last year's NL Cy Young Award winner, Lincecum is 10-2 with a 2.33 ERA for the San Francisco Giants. He will get the ball Tuesday night at Busch Stadium, NL manager Charlie Manuel announced.

Lincecum made the All-Star team for last season's game at Yankee Stadium but was unable to pitch because he was ill.

"This is a great accomplishment for me," Lincecum said, his long, shaggy hair protruding from under a black knit cap. "I think tomorrow the big thing is going to be just

getting to the field. And after that, just getting on the field."

Halladay, who is 10-3 with a 2.85 ERA for the Toronto Blue Jays, was chosen by AL manager Joe Maddon. This is Halladay's sixth All-Star appearance, but his first chance to start — and it could be his final trip in a Toronto uniform.

Blue Jays general manager J.P. Ricciardi said last week he'll listen to trade offers for the 2003 AL Cy Young Award winner, who is signed through 2010 and would have to agree to a deal.

At a news conference Monday, broadcaster Bob Costas called Halladay a member of the Blue Jays "at least for the moment,"



which drew a round of uneasy chuckles.

"It's tough. Obviously, I'm somewhere that I enjoy being and have spent my entire career. There's a lot,

I think, that goes into it," Halladay said. "I think as a player, there's that will to win, that will to do it in October and basically that's what all of this has

been about. I would like that chance. I'm not saying it won't be Toronto. You'd like to be three games up in first place and not have to deal with it." □

Fedrigo wins Tour's 9th stage

Lance still third and already talking about another run next year



TARBES- With the Pyrenees behind him but the toughest rides still to come, Lance Armstrong is already talking about another run next year in the Tour de France.

The 37-year-old Texan, coming out of 3½ years of retirement, remained in third place after Sunday's ninth stage.

Astana teammate Alberto Contador stayed in second place with about one-third of the race over and Rinaldo Nocentini of Italy held the yellow jersey a third straight day.

Armstrong rode deliberately during the 100-mile leg that was won by France's Pierrick Fedrigo and took cyclists from Saint-Gaudens to Tarbes and through the Roman Catholic shrine town of Lourdes.

"Today was pretty controlled, I thought, although it's never easy," Armstrong said. "It was very hot; the tempo was pretty regular ... We (Astana) just sat there and kind of rode our race."

The seven-time champion's appetite for competition clearly is not satisfied. After the day's racing, he was asked on French television if this would be his last year in cycling's premier race.

"Probably not," he said. "Maybe one more Tour." Armstrong, who is riding for Astana without salary this

year, has previously hinted he may launch his own team next season. When Astana was hit by financial trouble this year and faced the prospect of being thrown out of the ProTour, Armstrong said he could take over the team with the backing of U.S. sponsors. He now seems a lot further along from his remarks last year when he said the thrust of his return to the Tour and cycling was to promote awareness about cancer, which almost took his life.

Armstrong's legs have proved resilient and his racing savvy impressive. He also has

responded to the challenge from one of the sport's brightest lights -- Contador, the 2007 Tour winner. Their rivalry within Astana has now burst into the open.

The three-week Tour has its first rest day Monday.

It then cuts a swathe from central to northeast France in the second week before entering the Alps in the final week before the July 26 finish in Paris. The turning point could come on the next-to-last race day up the fabled Mont Ventoux, which Armstrong has called the toughest climb in France. □



Miami Heat offer Dwyane Wade extension

"It's no rush"

MIAMI -- When Dwyane Wade checked his cell phone shortly after midnight Sunday, he got perhaps the most predictable text message of his life.

After all, it hardly classifies as stunning news that the Miami Heat want to keep him.

Wade said Heat president Pat Riley texted those sentiments very early Sunday, in what amounts to a largely ceremonial move. The Heat had to wait until 12:01 a.m. on July 12 before they could formally offer an extension to the reigning NBA scoring champion, and Wade said Riley didn't wait too long before pressing the send button.

"It's no rush," Wade said. "We all know that."

Wade didn't reveal specifics of what the text message said, other than confirming the obvious, that Riley was reaffirming Miami's hope that the 2006 NBA finals MVP sticks around for many years to come.

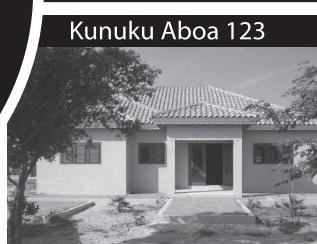
"Something like that," Wade said, moments before he and Alonzo Mourning capped the five-day Zo's Summer Groove fundraising series with a charity game featuring other NBA standouts like Caron Butler, Chris Paul, Carmelo Anthony and Wade's Miami teammates Udonis Haslem, Michael Beasley, Daequan Cook, Mario Chalmers and Dorell Wright. □

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Dodgers CEO Jamie McCourt

Manny Ramirez has “paid the penalty” for his steroid use

JERUSALEM - Los Angeles Dodgers chief executive officer Jamie McCourt said Monday that Dodgers slugger Manny Ramirez has “paid the penalty” for his steroid use and it was not for her to judge his actions.

McCourt, in Israel for the 18th Maccabiah Games, said she was as surprised as anyone when Ramirez tested positive for using a banned female fertility drug. He recently returned from a 50-game suspension.



“Not everyone is perfect and I am not going to judge what anyone does in their lives,” McCourt said. “But he has paid the penalty and it is now up to us to welcome him back to the team. It is up to the fans to decide how he is embraced and so far they have been supportive.” McCourt was vice chairman and president of the Dodgers before she was named CEO in March by her husband, Dodgers owner Frank McCourt.

The McCourts purchased the Dodgers in 2004 for \$430 million.

McCourt has been to Israel several times, including spending a semester at Hebrew University law school in Jerusalem. Her current visit is to mark the opening of the Maccabiah Games, which she sponsors.

Also known as the “Jewish Olympics,” the games are an international competition



for Jewish athletes held every four years in Israel. More than 900 American athletes will compete in this year’s games, officials said, making it the second-largest delegation behind Israel. The 10-day competition begins Monday.

This year baseball will be played for the first time and McCourt will kick off the tournament by throwing out the opening pitch ahead of Tuesday’s games.

McCourt said she has

become close with several Dodger legends, such as Sandy Koufax, who is also Jewish.

“Sandy has become a close personal friend and a brother to me,” she said.

McCourt said she has also connected to the young players on the team, many of whom are about the same age as her children. McCourt’s son, Gavin, was drafted last month by the Boston Red Sox.

And what about Ramirez?

“Manny is Manny,” she said. “He goes about his business and he works hard to be good at what he does. From a work ethic perspective and how he prepares for a game he is a good addition to the team and an example” for the younger players. She added that the Dodgers success during his absence proved that the team was more than a one-man show and said she believed they had what it takes to win the World Series this season. □

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Pedro Martinez to pass physical today for Phillies

PHILADELPHIA- Free-agent right-hander Pedro Martinez will take his physical with the Phillies on Tuesday and could sign with the team as soon as Wednesday, according to a major-league source.

The Phillies expect Martinez to be ready in approximately three weeks, meaning that he could make his debut for the club around Aug. 1.

Martinez, 37, likely will sign a major-league contract. He then would be placed on the disabled list and begin a minor-league rehabilitation assignment immediately.

While Martinez originally sought \$5 million to pitch this season, he is expected to sign for less than even a pro-rated portion of that amount. “When people find out what the money is,

they’re going to be surprised,” said one source with knowledge of the discussions. “It’s not about the money.”

The source said that one of Martinez’s goals is to win a National League title, something he did not accomplish in his four seasons with the Mets. He won an AL title -- and the World Series with the 2004 Red Sox.

Martinez missed almost all of the first two months of last season after straining his left hamstring, then went 5-6 with a 5.61 ERA in 20 starts for the Mets.

The Phillies, however, were impressed by the way he threw in two recent workouts. Martinez reached 88 to 89 mph with his fastball, one source said, and also displayed surprisingly good command. □

Police not ruling out involvement of third party in Gatti's death



strangled him with her purse strap.

But police spokeswoman Milena Saraiva says Monday nothing is being ruled out in the investigation, including the possibility another person may have been involved. Gatti was found dead early Saturday in a seaside tourist resort.

Saraiva says police in the northeastern state of Pernambuco are focusing on Gatti's 23-year-old Brazilian wife, Amanda Rodrigues.

She is in custody and has been accused by police of killing Gatti. Rodrigues has yet to be charged and has denied any involvement in the death. □

SAO PAULO- Brazilian police investigating the death of former boxing champion Arturo Gatti are working on the assumption his wife

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CUIDA BO OIDO

Fujimori acepta con reserva acusación en nuevo juicio

LIMA (Reuters) - El ex presidente peruano Alberto Fujimori aceptó el lunes que entregó una millonaria indemnización a su ex jefe de inteligencia Vladimiro Montesinos, pero rechazó la acusación penal de peculado en el inicio de su segundo proceso judicial público.

El abogado del ex presidente César Nakazaki afirmó que los 15 millones de dólares que Fujimori entregó a Montesinos en septiembre del 2000, como "compensación por tiempo de servicios", fueron después devueltos al Tesoro público.

Con la aceptación de los hechos, el proceso será sumario pues no se interrogará a más de 20 testigos en el caso y el presidente del tribunal, César San Martín, anunció que la lectura de la sentencia podría producirse el viernes.

El nuevo juicio, retrasado casi dos meses, se desarrolla en una base policial donde el 7 de abril Fujimori fue condenado a 25 años de prisión acusado de avalar la muerte de 25 personas, entre ellas un niño, durante una guerra contra rebeldes izquierdistas a inicios de su Gobierno en la década de 1990.

"Expresó conformidad limitada relativa con la acusación y la pretensión alternativa de la parte civil, solamente acepto los hechos,

no acepto la responsabilidad penal, la pena ni la reparación civil", dijo Fujimori en el tribunal.

Para este segundo juicio, los fiscales acusan a Fujimori de "peculado y falsedad ideológica" y han solicitado al tribunal una pena de ocho años de prisión y el pago de unos 660.000 dólares como reparación civil al Estado peruano.

Fujimori, que apareció con un traje oscuro y se sentó frente al panel de tres jueces, lució cansado en el inicio del nuevo proceso y por momentos cerraba los ojos dando la impresión de que se quedaba dormido durante el juicio. Ex presidente solicitó hasta dos veces consulta médica, lo que obligó a suspender la audiencia del lunes.

ALEGATOS

El abogado de Fujimori presentó al tribunal una serie de documentos que, según la defensa, avalaba la devolución del dinero que se entregó a Montesinos a través de un "decreto de urgencia" y respetando las normas constitucionales.

"No corresponde condonar a Fujimori al poderse verificar (...) la restitución de los fondos públicos y por tanto la no generación de daño civil al Estado", afirmó.

El fiscal del juicio, Avelino Guillén, dijo que Fujimori gestionó la devolución del dinero con "otros fondos" y que el retorno de una suma equivalente no anula la acusación penal.

El experto en temas penales Julio Rodríguez afirmó que lo que la defensa de Fujimori busca al aceptar los hechos suscritos en la acusación fiscal es que el proceso judicial sea corto, en momentos en que la salud del ex mandatario no es buena.

Además "le permite a la defensa concentrarse en otros procesos judiciales que se vienen y que son más complejos, principalmente las imputaciones de corrupción", agregó.

Fujimori tiene pendiente un tercer proceso que agrupa tres acusaciones: la interceptación telefónica ilegal, la compra de un canal de cable y el soborno a legisladores opositores.

Según investigaciones judiciales, Fujimori entregó la millonaria indemnización a Montesinos por sus 10 años de trabajo para el Estado pocos días después de que estallara el mayor escándalo de corrupción en el país.

Tras la entrega, Montesinos huyó a Panamá y luego de regresar por breves días en octubre del 2000 se fugó otra vez de Perú, hasta que fue



Imagen de archivo del ex presidente peruano Alberto Fujimori durante su juicio en Lima, 7 abr 2009. El ex presidente peruano Alberto Fujimori volvió el lunes por segunda vez al banquillo de acusados con el juicio por la entrega ilegal de 15 millones de dólares a su ex jefe de inteligencia, Vladimiro Montesinos. REUTERS/

capturado en Venezuela en el 2001.

El escándalo de corrupción derivó en la destitución de Fujimori -de 70 años- por parte del Congreso.

El ex mandatario, hijo de inmigrantes japoneses, se refugió después en Tokio amparado en su doble nacionalidad y en el 2005 partió sorpresivamente a Chile, donde permaneció casi dos años hasta que fue extraditado por la justicia de Perú. □

Fallo de La Haya un triunfo

MANAGUA - El gobierno de Nicaragua consideró el lunes como un "un triunfo" el fallo de la Corte Internacional de Justicia de La Haya, "porque se reconoce la plena soberanía" del país sobre el Río San Juan, dijo el vicecanciller nicaragüense, Valdrack Jaentschke.

Agregó que la pretensión costarricense de navegar el río con policías armados "fue totalmente desestimado por la Corte. "Eso quedó contundentemente claro. Las aguas son nicaragüenses y ese era una de los argumentos que Nicaragua deseaba confirmar".

La Corte Internacional de Justicia falló el lunes que las embarcaciones de Costa Rica pueden navegar libremente por el río San Juan, que marca gran parte de la frontera con Nicaragua, pero ratificó el derecho de Managua de regular ese tráfico e incluso requerir a los barcos costarricenses que lleven la bandera nicaragüense. Carlos Argüello, agente de Nicaragua ante La Haya, dijo a la emisora Radio Ya, que la Corte "dejó clarísimo que Costa Rica no tiene ningún derecho a circular

con sus autoridades por el río San Juan con armas o sin armas" "Tampoco tiene derechos a abastecer sus puestos de seguridad. La única finalidad autorizada por el tratado es con fines de comercio", dijo. "Pero lo mas importante es que la Corte dejó clarísimo que Nicaragua es absoluta y soberana para dictar todas las medidas razonables que tiendan a la seguridad y el bien del río y en ese sentido las puede tomar sin ninguna consulta con Costa Rica. Argüello consideró que las pretensiones de Costa Rica quedaron "absolutamente limitadas" "Para fines prácticos, puedo decir que todos los propósitos que Nicaragua tenía de defensa de sus derechos fueron reconocidos por la Corte", dijo. En el 2005, Costa Rica se quejó ante el tribunal de la ONU, conocido como la Corte Mundial, de que Nicaragua estaba violando sus derechos de navegación al imponer restricciones como exigir a pasajeros y turistas que porten visas y paguen impuestos de viaje, y que todos los buques pasen por puestos de inspección nicaragüenses. □

Perú reporta quinta muerte por gripe porcina

LIMA - Un hombre de 27 años que sufrió una cardiopatía severa se convirtió en la quinta víctima mortal del virus de la gripe porcina en Perú, donde el número de casos ascendió a 1.753, informó el ministerio de salud (MINSA).

El hombre estuvo internado en el hospital central de la Fuerza Aérea, según el MINSA, y su dolencia cardiaca influyó en su muerte porque pertenecía "a los grupos poblacionales de riesgo para esta enfermedad", indicó un comunicado el sábado.

Según datos oficiales, de los cinco fallecidos hasta el domingo, tres son mujeres y dos hombres. De las mujeres, una tenía 27 años y estaba embarazada, la otra tenía 38 años y padecía sobrepeso, y la última era una niña de 4 años con síndrome de Down.

El primer caso de gripe porcina en Perú fue detectado el 14 de mayo y las primeras muertes en el país a consecuencia de esta enfermedad fueron reportadas el 5 de julio. □

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